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# GREEK HISTORY

## FOR SCHOOLS

BY

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ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE, OSBORNE

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## PREFACE

THE writer of a Greek history which is intended for the use of schools meets with a difficulty at the outset the book must be short. Obviously not many details can be given, and many matters of interest must be entirely omitted. Greek history, moreover, is the history, not of one, but of many states. It is therefore extremely difficult to focus the attention upon one point alone. In writing this book I have attempted to secure some sense of unity in two ways. In the first place I have tried to group facts, often regardless of geography and chronology, round some conspicuous subject, such as colonisation or tyranny, in the second I have endeavoured to bring facts into relation with the leading state of a particular period, such as Athens or Macedonia. The inevitable result is that the less important and less known states are unduly neglected. But the limits of space and the necessity of unity will not allow it to be otherwise. However, a full index of names and subjects has been provided, and, by the careful use of this, a boy who really works should be able to gain a fair amount of information about some of the minor states and about many of the details of Greek life.

In the spelling of proper names I have followed no fixed rule. It seems to me that to adhere consistently to the original Greek spelling savours somewhat of pedantry. I have therefore generally adopted the ordinary English spelling which has come to us through Latin. The chief exception is that I have retained *ei* instead of the Latin *e* where I think that its use is a help to pronunciation. The usual English pronunciation is shown in the index.



The maps show almost every place that is mentioned in the book, and care has been taken to exclude those that are not mentioned. All the maps were drawn roughly in the first place by me, and then properly executed by the University Press. I hope that the drawing of rough contours may lead to the intelligent use of the maps.

The suggestions at the end of each chapter are not meant to form an exhaustive list of questions. They will serve their purpose if they indicate that to read a chapter and to study it are two very different things.

The illustrations have been borrowed from many sources, all of which are, I hope, duly acknowledged in the proper place. But here, too, I wish to express my hearty thanks to those who have so kindly given me permission to reproduce. In particular would I acknowledge my obligation to the English Photographic Co. of Athens, and to Dr A. H. Cooke for a number of his own excellent photographs.

Finally I must express my thanks to the Syndics of the University Press for entrusting me with the work, and to all the officials of the Press for their great assistance and their courtesy in meeting my wishes. Especially would I thank for their valuable advice and their labour in reading the proofs, Mr D. G. Hogarth, Mr G. V. Carey, Mr M. A. Lewis, and, above all, Dr A. H. Cooke.

C. D. EDMONDS

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OSBORNE  
*July 1914*

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## CHAPTER I

### THE GEOGRAPHY OF GREECE

The influence of geography upon history Amongst the various influences which help to determine the history of man and the development of civilisation, none have more profound and far reaching effects than geographical and climatic conditions, and in few places has the course of events been more conspicuously modified by such conditions than in the basin of the Aegean Sea For a clear understanding therefore of the history of the Greeks, it is absolutely necessary to have some idea of the physical characteristics of the stage on which that drama was played

The Aegean Sea as a centre In the first place let us look at the map of the Aegean area Western Asia from the dawn of history was the home of civilisation It falls into two well-marked parts Asia Minor is a high table-land, shut off from the sea on the south by the ranges of Taurus, and by Anti-Taurus and the Armenian mountains from the east, only one easy pass, the Cilician Gates, leading to the Euphrates and to Syria The northern coast is somewhat inhospitable But on the west the river valleys lead down to fertile plains and an indented coast with numerous sheltered bays At the north-west corner is the land-bridge to Europe, broken only by the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles Southwards the sea is studded with islands, stepping-stones to Greece and the west The trade of Asia Minor, then, is largely with the Aegean Sea The other division of western Asia consists

of the Euphrates-Tigris valley and the Syrian coast From here trade passes through the Cilician Gates and thence to Europe beyond, or else it finds its own outlet from the Syrian ports, hugs the coast from Cyprus as far as Rhodes, and thence passes to the west In either case it reaches the Aegean Sea

Egypt has a double channel for trade, the Red Sea and the Nile The distant ends of these channels open east and south, the nearer ends converge at Cairo and diverge again, the coast road leading north through Palestine, the water route going north-west by Crete, again to the Aegean Even further west, Cyrene finds its nearest neighbours in Crete and the Aegean Sea

Trade comes from the north too, along the valleys of the Danube and Dnieper and from the shores of the Black Sea But for all this there is but one opening, at the Sea of Marmora the water route north and south crosses the land route east and west and finds its only outlet in the Aegean Sea

On the western side is Greece, divided by a barrier lying north and south The main physical feature of its northern part is the mountain range of Pindus, which runs down like a backbone as far as the Corinthian Gulf There comes a gap in the barrier, but to direct sea-borne traffic it is blocked by the Isthmus of Corinth Had the Isthmus never existed, the history of Greece would have been far different South of it is the mountain mass of Arcadia with three fingers running down to the southern extremities of Greece, and the obstacle is continued across the sea by the fierce storms and rough seas of Cape Malea, always dreaded by the sailor in the days of open boats Thus Greece looks both east and west, double-faced The western side had harbours indeed, and in Italy, Sicily, and distant France and Spain there were colonies with which to trade But the Ionian Sea was rough, the one route with short passage across the open sea lay somewhat far to the north, from Corcyra to the heel of Italy, and in the western basin of the Mediterranean the

Carthaginians jealously disputed the rights of any but themselves to trade upon the sea, while the Etruscan pirates were the foes of commerce. Thus communication between Greece and the western Mediterranean was not so close as might have been expected, and the western colonies were left to develop by themselves. Far different was it on the south and east. The whole land opens out and points in that direction, bays and harbours are countless, the sea is not so rough, and a thousand stepping-stones lead to the civilisation of Asia across the Aegean Sea.

The Aegean, then, is the centre upon which all routes converge, and it is in the Aegean and its possessors that we see the development of history.

Greece (a) Northern Greece. Now we must look in more detail at Greece itself. The division north and south has already been indicated, but there are also divisions east and west which separate the country into Northern Greece, Central Greece, and the Peloponnese. West of the Pindus backbone Northern and Central Greece run into one, for the country consists mainly of rocky ranges and gloomy valleys parallel to the main range and the sea coast. The most notable river is the Achelous, the biggest river of Greece. But most of its course is through narrow and dark gorges, and it is of no use to civilisation, for it provides neither navigation, nor a roadway, nor a fertile soil. Hence this district of Acarnania, Aetolia, and Epirus was ever open to the inroads of savage northern tribes and was too backward to take serious part in the development of Greece.

East of the backbone the most northerly division is Macedonia, consisting of mountains in the west, but gradually sloping down the valleys to the plains which surround the north-west corner of the Aegean Sea and stretch eastwards into Thrace. It was a district which bred alike the hardy swordsmen of the hills and the horsemen of the plains, and it owed its wealth to the mines which supplied its later kings with gold.

South of this lies Thessaly, a wide-stretching plain of some fertility, but better suited to the rearing of cattle and horses.



On all sides it is surrounded by mountains with but few openings. On the west is the Pindus range, with one important pass at the north-west corner, where the Peneius finds its way into the plain. This, no doubt, was the route most used by the early invaders of Greece. Under the mountain wall which separates Thessaly from Macedonia the river flows across the northern plain, taking the drainage from the southern part too, and finds its way by the famous defile of Tempe to the sea. Tempe provides a narrow roadway to the sea and to Macedonia, but, before the river enters the defile, one valley and one pass bring south the only other roads from over the northern wall. Naturally, then, from the earliest days till now the town of Larissa has guarded the meeting-place. The eastern side is not open to the sea, but is shut off from it by a wall of three great mountains, Olympus, the home of the gods, a mass 10,000 ft high, to the north of Tempe, the peak of Ossa to the south, and then the ridge of Pelion. Sheltered from the winds by Pelion lies the big land-locked bay of Pagasae, the only real opening of Thessaly to the sea, the scene of the earliest maritime ventures of the Greeks. To the south the land is enclosed by the lower range of Othrys, a boundary indeed, but no serious obstacle to intercourse with the valley of the Spercheius which lies beyond.

(b) **Central Greece** On the south side of the plain of the Spercheius lies the mountain wall of Oeta, the boundary of Central Greece. This wall may be passed in two places. From the sea coast the difficult route climbs the mountain, as the modern road does to-day. Thence the traveller descends into the valley of the Cephissus, which leads down behind Parnassus into the open plain of Boeotia, or, continuing further along the pass on the western side of Parnassus, he comes down near Delphi into the plain and to the Corinthian Gulf. The other route, which is easy, the only one practicable for an army, skirts the eastern end of the mountains, and squeezes itself between them and the sea. This is the famous pass of Thermopylae, which in ancient times was so narrow that one cart was enough to block the way. Once past the narrows,





the coast route opens out and leads easily into Boeotia. The spot where the coast road and the mountain road diverged was naturally a point of immense strategic importance, but was too often neglected by the Greeks. The two roads meet again in Boeotia, near Chaeroneia, where the valley of the Cephissus is narrower. Hence this spot was the scene of more than one of the battles of history.

Central Greece itself is cut up into numerous small valleys and plains. Phocis, in the upper Cephissus valley, by virtue of its strategic position was bound to take part in the wars of Greece. But by far the largest and most important district was Boeotia. This plain lies low, and the drainage of the Cephissus is unable to get away except by subterranean channels natural and artificial. The water therefore collects into the marshy lake Copais, whose misty vapours were held to account for the proverbial slowness of the Boeotian intellect.

East of Boeotia lies the long island of Euboea, separated from the mainland by a strait of varying width, which at its narrowest spot, the Euripus, guarded by the town of Chalcis, is now crossed by a bridge. The outside of the island is precipitous and dangerous. Traffic therefore went by the straits, and Eretria and Chalcis were the keys to them. Euboea is continued south-eastwards in the islands called the Cyclades, a parallel row of islands continues the mountains of Attica, and it was to Euboea and Attica that they politically and racially belonged. South of Boeotia lies the range of Cithaeron-Parnes, penetrable with ease but only at certain points.

Attica lies beyond, a barren land consisting of small plains broken up by marble mountains such as Hymettus and Pentelicus. In the south, however, were the valuable silver mines of Laurium. Attica is so much of a promontory that it is almost insular and comparatively safe from attack except from the sea. This feature caused it to offer a refuge to those who fled before invasion, and its barren nature offered no attraction to the invader and no food to the enemy. The inhabitants therefore boasted that they were aboriginal sons

of the soil But the people could never attain greatness until the course of the Aeginetan and the Persian wars drove them on to the sea Thenceforward proximity to the islands of the Aegean and kinship with their inhabitants, combined with the keenness of intellect which arose from the glorious climate, and backed by the wealth from the silver mines, ensured that Athens should dominate Greece

The Megarid is geographically part of Attica, but in politics it belonged to the Peloponnese Lying on the road from north to south, and including part of the Isthmus with a port on either sea, Megara was bound to be a commercial city, but the existence of an awkward mass of mountain between her harbours and the proximity of Corinth and Aegina prevented her from becoming a first class state

✓ (c) Peloponnese Now we come to the Peloponnese, joined on to the mainland only by an isthmus  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in breadth First let us consider the position of Corinth Standing as it did at the point where East and West must meet, and goods must be carried overland from the one sea to the other, the town took toll of all commerce and became the most wealthy and the most luxurious in Greece Then, too, its strategic position was of the greatest value With its impregnable citadel on the hill called the Acrocorinthus, it guarded safely the Peloponnese, and none could pass in or out by land without its consent Hence it was of the utmost importance for the Dorian inhabitants of the Peloponnese that it should be in Dorian hands, and hence too it was that the Dorians were so exclusive and conservative and held themselves apart from the rest of the Greek race Commercially Corinth found a formidable rival in the island of Aegina, which is placed in front of it and could completely cut its trade, and so successful was Aegina, till the rise of Athens caused its fall, that the Aeginetan standard of weights and measures was largely adopted throughout Greece

The centre of the Peloponnese is a mass of mountains and small upland plains This part was known as Arcadia Of all the regions of Greece it alone did not reach the sea, and

therefore remained in a backward state. Its highlanders were involved in perpetual hostility with their neighbours of Sparta, who could not leave their land without passing through or near Arcadian territory.

On the east of Arcadia lies Argolis. The plain is fertile and opens towards the Aegean, and from the earliest times its towns traded extensively with the east. Through its territory too it was possible to reach the Corinthian Gulf, avoiding Corinth itself. But the fact that it too blocked the Spartan road to the north caused everlasting friction with the southern state.

Southwards from Arcadia the mountains stretch like three fingers, the central one being named Mount Taygetus. On the east side of this range in the valley of the Eurotas lies another fertile plain, the district of Laconia, with Sparta as its capital. It was shut off from the north by Arcadia and Argolis. Open to the sea indeed it was on the south, but two stormy promontories discouraged maritime enterprise. Thus, unapproached by trade and external influence, Laconia must needs be isolated and conservative, and only military and naval efficiency could enable Sparta to take a share in Greek affairs.

West of Taygetus is Messenia, the richest part of Greece in agricultural wealth, but a district completely excluded from the rest of the world and at the mercy of its military neighbours on the east.

In the north-west corner lies the plain of Elis by the mouth of the Alpheus. It too had little part in Greek history, but once in every four years it was the resort of all Greece at the great Olympic games.

Finally, between the Arcadian mountains and the Corinthian Gulf lay the narrow strip of Achaea, of which little is known and little heard until the last days of Greek independence.

Effects of geographical conditions. Thus, then, all Greece is cut up into small districts. The mountains, abrupt and precipitous, with rugged sides and deep ravines, make communication between plain and plain difficult though never

impossible The few rivers that flow all the year round afford no help, they fall steeply from the mountains through dark gorges or along rocky torrent beds, river-navigation is unknown, the winter streams, dry for most of the year, afford only a poor and stony road Moreover, the very plains are for the most part so small that only one city can thrive upon each of them Where there are two or more towns, there must be a bitter struggle for existence In these small states anyone might rise to importance, and one speech might catch the ear of the country Hence arose the eager interest in politics and the tendency to democracy which characterised the Greek The smallness of their population also produced the result that only Sparta and Macedonia, by their extraordinary military ability, and Athens, through her sea power, were ever able to impose their domination upon their neighbours Thus the history of Greece is the history of numerous petty states, intensely jealous of their independence and full of local patriotism Unity could only come from an outside power, such as Rome, strong enough to impose its will by force of numbers

Yet sources of union were not wanting All over Greece the sea was within sight and reach, and furnished the easiest and often the only means of communication All over Greece the land was incapable of supporting a large population, for the rugged mountains took up most of the space, the rivers were for the most part mere winter torrents, and the soil, except in a few favoured spots, was barren All over Greece the climate was good, the rainfall was small, the north-east winds blowing from the Black Sea to the Sahara were bracing even in summer, and stimulated physical effort and mental activity, the sunny skies and clearness of the atmosphere instilled a love of outdoor life and the beautiful, even the proximity of rival cities was an incitement to competition Small wonder, then, that the Greeks were vigorous and hardy, yet artistic and intellectual, small wonder that they turned to the sea and sent forth their colonies, their commerce, and their culture in every direction It was this community of







interests produced by geographical considerations, and community of blood, religion, manners, and language, that made them all akin and marked off the Greek from the barbarian

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 How did geography influence Aegean civilisation ?
- 3 Why did the east side of Greece develop more rapidly than the west ?
- 4 How was the ' nature of the country likely to affect the character, the pursuits, and the political history of the Greeks in general and of the individual states ?

## CHAPTER II

### AEGEAN CIVILISATION

**Recent discoveries** Until nearly the end of last century Greek history might have been said to begin at the earliest with the life and civilisation portrayed for us in the Homeric poems. The truth, however, of the picture itself, and still more of the events there presented to us, was very much in doubt, and some critics were inclined to deny the very existence of such a place as Homeric Troy.

But soon after the year 1870 a wealthy German merchant named Schliemann, who had conceived a passionate enthusiasm for Homer and a simple faith in the truth of the stories of the Trojan war, devoted a considerable part of his fortune to the work of exploring the reputed sites of Troy, the city of Priam, and Mycenae, the home of Agamemnon. To the astonishment of the learned world he unearthed at Troy a number of cities, one on the top of another. The second from the bottom had undoubtedly been burnt, and this Schliemann assumed to be the Troy which was taken by the Greeks. Subsequent

investigation by his compatriot, Dr Dorpfeld, has shown that the second city belonged to a much earlier time, about 3000 B.C., and that the sixth city, to which Schliemann had paid little attention, had been of infinitely greater importance and, as shown by the nature of the remains, belonged to 1200 B.C., the traditional period of the Trojan war

In his excavations at Mycenae, where ancient walls and huge "beehive" shaped tombs had always been visible, Schliemann was even more fortunate in his discoveries. While digging in a circle of stones in the citadel he came upon a number of graves, in which the bodies lay surrounded by bronze weapons and a wealth of golden objects. At once he thought that he had opened the tomb of Agamemnon himself. But critics pointed out certain discrepancies between his discoveries and Homeric life—in particular, the Homeric dead were always burnt upon the funeral pyre, still, the resemblances were very marked. During the next twenty years similar discoveries were made in the islands and in various places of the Greek mainland, mostly near the sea. But so completely did the treasures of Mycenae eclipse what else was found, that the name "Mycenaean" was given to such objects and the civilisation that produced them.

Since 1900 excavations conducted in various spots on the shores of the Aegean Sea, and especially in the island of Crete, where Sir Arthur Evans was the leader of the work, have revealed a wonderful civilisation which flourished in the Eastern Mediterranean a thousand years before Abraham entered the Promised Land, and came to an abrupt end soon after the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. To this wider civilisation, owing to the area over which it was mainly spread, the name of "Aegean" has been given. Of this the "Mycenaean" is only a later phase, while the earlier stages, from having had their centre in Crete, the home of Minos, are frequently known as "Minoan". While this culture was probably not the work of the Greeks, yet it flourished in the lands which were afterwards occupied by the Greeks, and it was the foundation upon which was built all the civilisation



Minoan Dress





which the Greeks themselves developed and bequeathed to subsequent ages

**The Stone Age** Long before the art of writing was invented and long before poets and chroniclers existed to tell of the deeds of bygone heroes, for thousands of years there existed men who, as yet unable to work metals, made use of weapons and utensils of clay, of wood, and of stone. The men therefore of the later part of this long period are known as the men of the New Stone or "Neolithic" Age. The islands and shores of the Mediterranean and the western countries of Europe, the greater part, in fact, of the lands between the northern edge of the Sahara and a line drawn roughly from Britain to Cyprus, seem to have been occupied by white men of medium height, with straight, dark hair, dark complexion, and long, narrow heads. This type is known as the Mediterranean race.

**The Bronze Age.** Gradually, as their civilisation developed, they became more skilled and were able to work the softer metals such as copper and tin. They discovered too that a mixture of copper and tin formed a hard compound, bronze, which would take a fine cutting edge. Henceforward progress was comparatively rapid, but the use of bronze was for long confined to weapons and implements, for the metals were rare and had to be brought from far afield—copper from Cyprus in the east and tin from Britain and Spain in the extreme west, in either case from across the sea.

**Crete** Thus it is perhaps natural that one of the earliest civilisations arose in an island where the trade routes from east and west might converge, namely in Crete. Its position gave Crete other advantages too: the seas surrounding it were in early days the surest defence against invasion and interruption, at the same time they provided an easy means of communication to the venturesome who dared to travel upon them, north-west, north, and north-east were convenient stepping-stones to the continents of Europe and Asia, while, when men grew bolder, the journey across to Cyrene and Egypt was not so very long after all. The island was fertile

too in the centre lies a long range of mountains, high enough to feed the streams with their snows and to catch the rain from the moisture-laden winds as they come across the seas, along the coasts are the plains irrigated by these streams and springs, on every side is the sea with its wealth of fish

This Bronze Age began in Crete about 3000 B C, and from that time onward civilisation developed with no very serious interruption, until disaster from outside came at a date which we can fix with fair accuracy about 1350 B C. The Homeric poems speak of "Crete of a hundred fair cities", and the spade of the modern archaeologist testifies to the general truth of the description

**Cnossus** But of all the sites which have been excavated none has yielded more information and richer treasure than the site of Cnossus, the traditional city of Minos, the Minotaur, and the Labyrinth. There has been unearthed the town itself, and more especially the palace of its kings. The remains are not all of one period. The palace was first built in grand style not long after 2500 B C, apparently about 2000 B C. Things did not go quite smoothly in Crete, perhaps there was some trouble from outside, at any rate there was a decline in art, but by 1600 B C the palace had been rebuilt in grander style than before, and of this building no inconsiderable part remains. It covers some six acres of ground, and is a perfect maze of rooms and corridors. Here we see a big hall, with what may be the throne of the king, there, supported on wooden pillars, is the grand staircase of stone leading to the floor above, in another part are passages, with recesses and store rooms still furnished with huge jars for holding corn, oil, and wine. The walls are of masonry, and inside were covered with plaster adorned with paintings. The palace has even its bathrooms, its water supply, and its drains and sanitary arrangements, far superior to anything known in our own country from the time of the Romans until quite modern days. It was of at least two, perhaps even of three storeys, flat-roofed, well lit and ventilated with windows and openings to the sky, and furnished with folding and sliding doors. Little wonder that



Jars in Store Room, Cnossus Palace







the Greeks in later times, when they saw the confused ruins of these buildings with their decorations of axes and bull-headed men and bull-baiting in which boys and girls took part, developed a legend how King Minos bade Daedalus the architect build a labyrinth<sup>1</sup> and there enclosed the Minotaur which fed on youths and maidens. Thus has the word labyrinth come to mean a maze, and as such it appears on Cretan coins of historical times.

**Minoan dress and armour** In dress too the Cretans came wonderfully near to us, and the hats and high coiffures, the bodices and the skirts with their flounces and embroideries, and the wasp-like waists and pointed shoes, which were fashionable among the women of Cnossus, would scarcely be out of place in a modern drawing-room. Men wore a simpler costume: they had no hats, but wore their hair long and plaited, their clothes consisted mainly of a kilt or loin-cloth held in position by a belt, and a cloak thrown over the shoulders, their feet were protected by top-boots of leather. For fighting, a long spear and a short sword were used, and protection was afforded by a leathern helmet and a huge flexible shield of hide stiffened by a metal rim. Bowmen too accompanied the warriors as light-armed troops. Chariots were in use for purposes of war, but the horse, brought from overseas, was a rare animal and, as far as we know, was not used for riding. In Crete, however, there does not seem to have been much war. Secure in their insular position and trusting to the traditional justice of the rule of King Minos and to the prosperity of the land, the lords of Cnossus seem to have thought fortifications unnecessary. At least no trace of them has been found in Crete, though, when this Minoan civilisation spread to the mainland and became the culture of the Aegean, in places such as Mycenae, Tiryns, and Troy, mighty walls and means of defence were the essentials of those cities' existence.

**The town.** In the town the flat-roofed, many-windowed houses were built in irregular fashion. The streets were

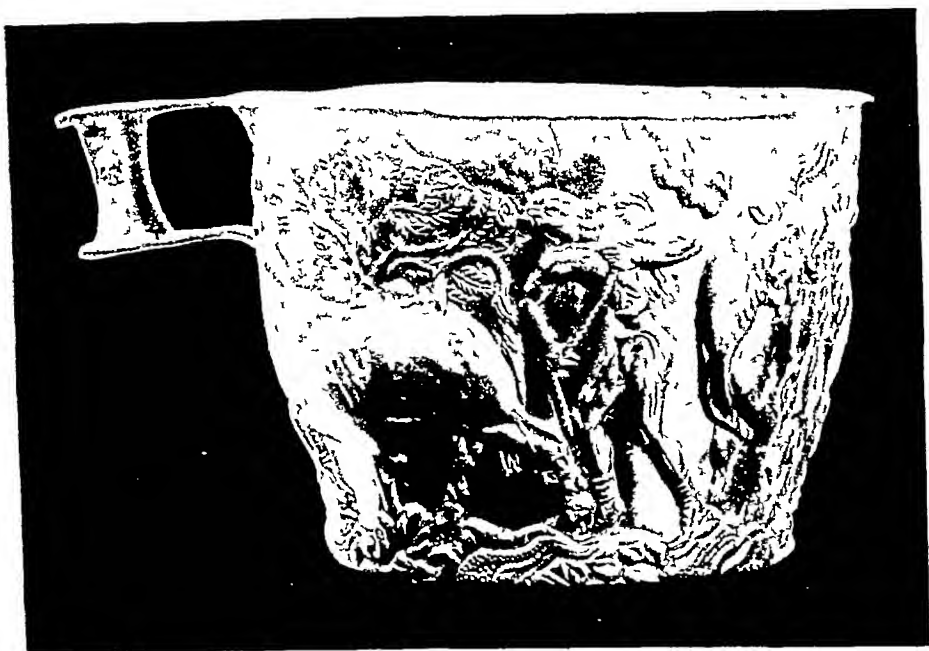
<sup>1</sup> The name means "place of axes"—*λάβρυς* an axe

winding and uneven, they were good enough for pedestrians; level and wide roads were not necessary when wheeled traffic hardly existed. Clothes were mainly made at home, but in the streets were houses where the potter might be seen at work making the brightly painted vases and figures which were in universal use and were exported abroad to Egypt, Sicily, and all parts of the Mediterranean. Here you might watch the carver at work upon small figures of ivory and stone. There was the shop of the engraver busy at the gems for rings and seals. Opposite him was the goldsmith intent upon his jewellery and ornaments of beaten and graven gold and inlaid work. The armourer was not content with making his swords and daggers of bronze, he was manufacturer, but he was artist too, and his weapons must be inlaid with scenes in gold and silver. In the *Iliad* is a famous description of the inlaid shield which Hephaestus wrought for Achilles. This is no mere fancy on the part of the poet, it is only an exaggeration of such work as was common in the Minoan Age.

**Writing** Nor was the art of writing unknown. Even in 3000 B.C. the Cretans, like the Egyptians, had their system of writing with conventional pictures to represent the signs, while very soon they developed another method, in which, as with us, the letters were composed of lines<sup>1</sup>. But writing could not be general without good material on which to write, it is uncertain whether paper or parchment was known, what remains is chiefly an immense store of clay tablets, which apparently are lists of names, inventories of stores and tribute, kept in the palace as records and registers of what was due to the monarch who ruled all Crete and possibly all the coasts of the Aegean Sea.

**Country life** But life was not confined to the city. Most of the people of Crete, no doubt, were engaged in occupations outside. In the meadows and on the hills grazed the sheep, the cattle, and the goats, in the plains waved fields of corn till harvest was ended in May, then came the season when on

<sup>1</sup> The Cretan writing at present cannot be deciphered, and we can only guess at the meaning of the records.



**Mycenaean Gold Cups**

(From Vaphio near Sparta Made of beaten gold)



the terraced slopes men tended the vines till the vintage was done, and finally gathered in the olives, the last fruits of the year

**The sea.** Meantime on the coast the fishermen toiled for their living, and not only edible fish, but sponges and the purple shell-fish provided a livelihood Others again, in summer and autumn at least, were seafaring men In their ships with low freeboard, single mast, and square sail they wandered over the seas, bearing to Egypt, Cyprus, the Aegean shores, South Italy, Sicily, and Spain their wine, their oil, their pottery, and the products of their handicraft, and receiving in exchange ivory, copper, lead, tin, silver, gold, and even the amber which came overland from the far away shores of the Baltic.

**Minoan empire** With such trade upon the water it was inevitable that piracy should exist, and tradition tells how Minos swept away the pirates and extended his dominions over the seas. Certain it is that in the latter part of the Minoan Age this civilisation spread to the other islands and the shores of Greece If it be a correct view that the registers found in the palace are records of tribute paid, it may after all be true that the Athenians were bound to send their tribute of seven youths and seven maidens every year, but it is more likely that their fate was to be slaves in the Labyrinth palace rather than to be a dinner for the Minotaur Perhaps, too, tradition does not err when it says that Minos died fighting in Sicily and was buried there

**Religion** In matters of religion the Cretans and people of the Aegean were different from the Greeks Instead of having a host of deities, they believed in one Great Mother of all, Nature personified She showed herself in the various forms of nature, on earth and in the sky She had no human shape, and so at first there were no images of her But worship and sacrifice were paid to emblems such as the double-headed axe, or pillars which marked the sacred spot These shrines appear in the palaces, and indicate that the king was high priest too Later the Great Mother was represented in

human form, often attended by an inferior male divinity, her attendants were either doves or snakes, symbolising her power in the air and on the earth. When the Greeks entered these lands, she passed in among the numerous Greek deities, sometimes as Aphrodite, sometimes as Artemis.

**Burial** Since all things came from her, all things must needs return to her. And so we find the Aegeans careful about the bestowal of their dead. The bodies were never burned, as was the custom of the Greeks. They were enclosed in small chambers of stone or earth, either in a lying or in a sitting posture, and were accompanied by weapons, vessels, and implements that might be of use to them in another world. At a later time, probably to prevent spoliation of the tombs, the graves were dug deep. Such are the famous tombs of the kings of Mycenae. There the bodies had perhaps been embalmed, the faces were covered with masks of gold, and an extraordinary profusion of bronze weapons and gold ornaments was discovered in the graves. Still later the fashion changed, and for princes at least it was the custom to make in the hill side a huge and elaborate "beehive" chamber, lined with finely dressed stone and ornamented with sculpture and colour. It is again at Mycenae that the most notable examples of these tombs occur.

**Fall of Cnossus** Such, then, is the picture of this Minoan, or Aegean, civilisation which we can reconstruct. It is hard to realise that it grew and lasted with but slight interruption for more than 1500 years. But in the end destruction came upon it suddenly. About the year 1350 B.C. the palace at Cnossus was taken and burnt. It is true that a part of it was rebuilt and used again, but the place had lost its former glory, its empire was broken up, its art declined. For the next 300 years the centre of Aegean civilisation seems rather to have been on the mainland of Greece, at Mycenae and at Tiryns. Lastly, about 1000 B.C. there was a final catastrophe, and we know nothing more of Crete till some centuries later it appears as an island of the Greeks.

SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 What advantage of position was held by Crete?
- 3 What evidence is there that the early Aegean race was not Greek?
- 4 Describe life in Cnossus in 1500 B C
- 5 What makes us inclined to believe that legends have some truth in them?

## CHAPTER III

### THE HEROIC AND HOMERIC AGE

**The Dark Ages** What had happened? Now we come to an extremely obscure period, a time about which the Greeks themselves had a multitude of names and a great number of more or less contradictory and vague traditions, nor have modern historians been able to come to any sure agreement upon the subject. Just as the Roman empire fell before the rush of barbarian tribes, and the Dark Ages set in when the invaders nearly ruined civilisation and Christianity, but yet adopted so much of what they destroyed that they in their turn developed into the nations of modern Europe, and as in the darkness of those days there stand out certain names such as Arthur and Roland, Attila and Charlemagne, round whom has gathered a halo of legend that dazzles our vision of the truth, so upon the Aegean civilisation came the wild men from the north, stronger through their rougher life, more powerful with their weapons of iron, they conquered and they settled amongst their beaten foes, they adopted much of the outward culture which they devastated, but they brought with them their own religion and their own tongue. Heroic names stand out amongst them—Jason, Agamemnon, Hector, and Odysseus, legend glorified their memory, finally there emerged



into the clear light of day the mixed race who called themselves Hellenes, whom we, through a Roman mistake, know as the Greeks. Amidst the confused mass of tradition, however, the Greeks were certain upon two points. The first was that their land was once held by princes, Achaeans as they were for the most part called, and that these princes fought together in a war against the people of Troy. The second was that after this war a fresh swarm of Greeks, known as the Dorians, invaded and settled in the southern part of Greece, which is called the Peloponnese.

**The northern invaders.** These invaders from the north belonged to a different or partly different type of man. At any rate among them the strongest element belonged to a fair-haired race with rounder heads, men who burned their dead and spoke a language which is one of the Aryan group, the family of languages which predominates in Europe and reaches along Asia Minor and the mountain zone of Asia down into the Ganges valley. Moving down southwards into the Balkan peninsula for some reason to us unknown, perhaps owing to pressure from other tribes behind or unsuitable change of climate in their old homes, the northerners seem to have followed two tracks.

**The Greeks, or Hellenes.** Those who followed the western route and for long were among the mountains of Albania, gradually moved south along the line of the western valleys till they reached the mouth of the Corinthian Gulf, and so passed into the north-west Peloponnese, or else broke across the Pindus range and entered Greece at the north-west corner of Thessaly, and gradually pushed further south into Central Greece by land, and into the Peloponnese perhaps by sea as well. These tribes, known by various names, came to recognise their kinship and community of religion and language in the common name of Hellenes. *Hellas* was a name originally of the district round the oracle of Zeus at Dodona in Epirus, in the Homeric poems it belonged to the mountainous south of Thessaly, while in historical times it was applied to all the country which we include under the name of Greece, and even

to its colonies In fact it was the land where the Hellenes went

**The Phrygians** The other branch, generally recognised as Phrygian, lived more in the eastern plains of the Balkan district, and many of them in their wanderings crossed over the Bosphorus or the Dardanelles Some, realising the possibilities of trade at such a position or the rewards offered to brigandage at the four cross roads of trade between Europe and Asia, between the Black Sea and the Aegean, settled at the spot and fortified it against the inevitable assaults Hence arose the Troy of Homer on the site of previous towns Others passed on to found the kingdoms in the interior such as that of Midas in Phrygia But many stayed behind in Europe, known to the Greeks as the semi-barbarous tribes of Thrace and Macedonia Thus we find the Trojans regarded by the Greeks as a people of similar language and customs, Thrace, though barbarous, was not a foreign land, and the later kings of Macedon had no difficulty in asserting their Hellenic origin.

**The Achaean invasion, c 1300 B C** However, it is with the western branch that we have most to do No doubt from 2000 B C onwards, or even earlier, the southern movement was in progress In Crete about that time there was a disturbance of some sort Tribe after tribe came pressing south, eager for plunder and war, establishing itself in the new lands, mingling in race and customs with the old but introducing much of the new Thus we find that in language the invaders prevailed, and in all parts the Greek tongue in various dialects was spoken, in religion, Zeus and the Olympians for the most part displaced the older deities—Cronus was dethroned, while the Giants and Titans were cast into the world below, in the treatment of the dead, cremation took its place beside the older form of burial, in the arts, the newcomers had much to learn and adopted the Aegean style

No doubt the number of the invaders in proportion to the older inhabitants varied greatly in different parts, chiefly owing to geographical influences. In Thessaly, Laconia, and

Argolis the conquest was fairly complete. Arcadia in the mountain heart of the Peloponnese was scarcely touched, and Attica always boasted that invasion had been driven back and her inhabitants were born of the soil. Yet both in Arcadia and in Attica the earliest language of which we know was Greek. In the Peloponnese it is possible that the invaders came from Thrace by sea, and the legends of Pelops the Phrygian suggest that some of the Achaeans there belonged to the Phrygian stock. By the end of the fourteenth century the invasion had gathered full force. Greece was full, there was nought left to sack, the adventurers must fare across the sea. Though Greek records afford us little light, yet the Egyptian monuments and the Cretan discoveries make things clear. About 1350 B.C. Cnossus was attacked and burnt, and the power was transferred to new centres such as Sparta and Mycenae, while near 1200 B.C. even Egypt felt the pirates of the north and had hard work to repel their raids. This was the time of which Thucydides wrote when he said that of old the Greeks were all of them pirates, that every man went armed, and that for greater security towns were always built at some distance from the sea.

The Trojan war, c. 1200 B.C. In the midst of this turmoil and confusion, when the object of all was plunder and adventure, when the highest title to fame was to be, like Odysseus, "a waster of cities", about 1200 B.C. a quarrel arose among the pirates themselves. It may be that the Achaeans of Northern Greece at this time set forth from Iolcus, the port of Thessaly, in the *Argo* upon fresh adventure bound, and, forcing their way through the Hellespont to explore the Black Sea, came into collision with those Phrygians who had established their brigand fortress at Troy. Or perchance the Homeric story is true, and Paris, the son of Priam, visiting Sparta, ran away with Helen the wife of its king Menelaus. Whatever the origin of it may have been, at any rate the quarrel broke out, and Agamemnon of Mycenae, "king of men", championing the Achaean cause, led the warrior chiefs of Greece against the town of Troy. After a lengthy war



Foundations of Troy

(The wall on the left is that of Homeric Troy)



Troy fell, and the victorious Greeks and beaten Trojans alike were scattered. Aeneas fled across the seas to die in Italy, Agamemnon returned to be murdered by his faithless wife; Odysseus, after years of wandering, reached his home to find his wife true and to avenge himself on the suitors, but to die at length in Egypt far from Ithaca. So ran the tales—untrue perhaps, but they give us a picture of the times—wild warfare, raids, adventures, and confusion.

**Homer** To this period belongs the life of the Homeric poems, this is the Heroic Age. Fine tales were these to tell; fine songs the wandering minstrels sang. The heroes perished; the age of great deeds passed, but the memory of them was immortal. Presently arose a race of bards who wove these stories into one harmonious whole in a series of great poems known as the Epic Cycle. Of these the only ones preserved to us are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the songs which were first composed and served as models for the rest, the two great poems which we know as "Homer." Tradition has it that Homer was the blind poet of the island of Chios, and to most men that is enough. For the last century a wordy warfare has raged as to whether a man called Homer ever existed, whether the poems are the work of one hand or of many, whether they were originally written in the dialect in which we have them or in another. With such controversies we are not concerned. To us "Homer" is the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the two greatest epics of the world, which echo the sounds of the Heroic Age and preserve a picture, exaggerated it may be, of life when the Achaeans had come into the land, when the old and the new were mingled, but the final Dorian invasion of 1100 B.C. was as yet unknown.

**Homeric life** From the poems we see how society was then constituted. As was necessary in an age of fighting and migration, government was monarchical. At the head was the king, of semi-divine or heroic descent, who was leader in war, judge, and priest. He was not all-powerful; the nobles had to be consulted and their advice heeded, and the decision was referred to the approval of the general body of

freemen The king had no divine right, but held his position for himself and his son after him only on condition of their fitness for the leadership, and it was in virtue of his office that he received a royal palace and a large share of the public land and of the spoils of war As general, he led the host on all important occasions, driving in his chariot, clad in bronze armour, helmet, shield, cuirass, and greaves, with spear in his hand, with sword and dagger by his side, the nobles also in their chariots accompanied him, the freemen followed on foot, cavalry was unknown As judge, the king sat in the open market-place with the elders around him There was no written law, but judgment was given in accordance with custom and the justice of the case The elders expressed their opinion, and the king declared his decision As priest, the king offered sacrifice to the gods In a stage where the tribe was ever in motion from place to place, there were no temples and few fixed forms of worship, hence there was little need for priests except as seers or guardians of a sacred spot, and the few religious duties were discharged by the king as the father of the state-family

After the king came the nobles These formed the council in judgment and in war, the king's decision was his own, but it was not often that he opposed the wishes of his nobility

Below these again were the mass of freemen, engaged for the most part in tilling their own plots of land They met in the general assembly to hear the decision of the king, but could do little more than express their approval or disapproval by their shouts or murmurs

Life was simple and primitive In the *Odyssey* we find the queen engaged in managing her household and her weaving, the princess and her maids busy with the family washing, the king himself took part in building his own house and directing the work of his servants upon his farm Hired servants were to be had, but more often the work was done by slaves, both male and female, captured in war These were treated with kindness, and, except that they were in a foreign land and were not free, could have found little to complain of in their lot

Women mixed freely with men and were treated with the utmost respect, far more so than in later Greece, and family ties were of the closest

Life of course was not safe outside the limits of the state. Even in the tribe the penalty for homicide was merely blood-money paid to the kinsfolk of the slain. Quarter was not given in war, and mutilation of the dead was frequent. The killing of a stranger called for no comment. Yet, if that stranger had claimed protection or hospitality, to deny that claim was a shameful sin before the gods, and any taint of murder or impurity that violated the sanctity of family life brought down the wrath of heaven.

The gods were the new Aryan divinities brought in by the conquering race. At their head was Zeus, who ruled amongst them like an Homeric king. They were immortal. Otherwise they were but superior men: like men they ate, slept, and fought, like men they loved and hated, like men they had their virtues and their faults. Indeed in the point of morality men compared favourably with the gods, and the Greeks of a later day were shocked by the loose manners which an earlier and less sensitive age had attributed to their deities. For the most part they lived on Olympus, the highest mountain of Greece, lying to the north of Thessaly. But the gods often travelled abroad and appeared among men to give them protection or bring punishment. They had to be propitiated with libation and with sacrifice, but on the whole they were easy-going rulers of the world, and did not interfere unless appeals were made in prayer, or some gross neglect or sin provoked them to take part in the affairs of men. Besides the Olympian gods there were the deities of the sea and of the world below, and a host of minor divinities in every mountain, stream, and wood.

Such was the Greek world of Homer. And if we allow for the inevitable exaggerations of a minstrel singing ballads of an heroic age now gone, we shall have a fair idea of Greek society in the Achæan period from 1300 to 1100 B.C. But, however much we treat as legendary, let us not forget that to



the historical Greeks these poems were true, and furnished the basis of their education and the pattern of the heroic ideals at which they aimed

**The Dorian invasion, c 1100 B C** Having thus dealt with the first invasion which produced Achæan Greece and the heroes of the Trojan war, we must now turn our attention to the second series of events on which Greek tradition insisted, for it was to produce far greater changes and shiftings of the population than the coming of the Achæans. This was what Greek legends termed the Return of the Heracleidae, the invasion of the Dorians

When the Achæan movement had more or less spent itself and settled down to a civilisation founded upon that Aegean culture which it had raided, the door was left open to other influences. It was at this time that the Phoenicians got into their hands the commerce of the Aegean which had once belonged to Crete, and left the mark of their civilisation in many of the islands and at various spots along the shores of Greece which faced the Aegean Sea. The most notable of their contributions to later Greece was their alphabet. The Phoenicians were traders in search of wealth, they had no wish to be conquerors of an empire, and so they were welcomed, not repulsed.

Yet the movement from the north had never ceased, and a century after the Trojan war it came upon the land of Greece with redoubled force. Owing to pressure from Illyrians in the mountainous region east of the Adriatic, other Greek tribes who hitherto had remained in Albania, the Boeotians, Thessalians, and Dorians, now left their mountain homes and poured upon the plains. Entering by the same pass as the Achæans, where the river Peneius flows eastwards from the Pindus range, Boeotians and Thessalians invaded the northern Achæan land. The Thessalians found a new and permanent home in the plain which ever since has borne their name, but the Boeotians were thrust on before them and crossed the passes of Othrys, the valley of the Spercheus, and Thermopylae, and, entering the plain of Boeotia, there settled down

Only the town of Orchomenus in that plain held out against the invaders and in historical times was still at perpetual enmity with them. Further the immigrants could not go, they were stopped at the passes of Cithaeron by the inhabitants of Attica.

Behind these two tribes came the Dorians. Travelling southwards they reached the mountainous part of Central Greece. They left their name in the tiny plain behind Mt Parnassus, and, south of it, in the valley in which Delphi stands facing sun and sea, they planted the worship of Apollo, the especial Dorian deity. Foiled in an attempt upon the Isthmus, they then turned westwards along the northern shores of the Corinthian Gulf. But the land was too narrow for them, they were driven on to the sea. Joining with the tribes of Aetolia, who too were being pressed upon from the north, they started from Naupactus to cross the Gulf at its western end where they were no longer faced by the wall of Arcadian mountains. The Aetolians did not accompany them far, for they settled in Elis, but the Dorians pushed up the Alpheius valley and then down into Messenia and Laconia. In Laconia they broke the power of the rich Achaean lords and founded their own group of villages, which later became the open town of Sparta, ever to remain an armed camp in a hostile land. Argolis they entered from the south, coming probably by sea, but whether they sailed from the Corinthian Gulf or, as tradition says, from Thermopylae, we cannot decide. They sacked Tiryns and Mycenae, the greatest and most wealthy of Achaean strongholds, and occupied Argos instead to dominate the plain. From here later they pushed northwards to conquer Sicyon and Corinth. North-eastwards they traversed the Isthmus as far as Megara, and also occupied Epidaurus and the island of Aegina. But they again, like the Boeotians, were repulsed when trying to enter Attica. Arcadia too, as before, remained proof against the Dorian attack, or was not worth the attempt. The earlier inhabitants generally were reduced to dependence, or retired northwards along the Corinthian Gulf into the narrow strip

which afterwards bore the Achæan name, or, as the Ionians, fled eastwards into Attica. The Dorian invasion and conquest no doubt took generations to complete, but, when it was done, the result was far more serious than that caused by the coming of the earlier invaders. Achæans had raided and plundered, but they settled down amidst the splendour of the Aegean civilisation. The Dorians came and destroyed, and, after their coming, for three hundred years the history of Greece is well-nigh a blank.

**The migrations** But the tale of change is not yet complete. The Achæans of the north, either from love of adventure or from Thessalian pressure, set sail and tried to force their way into the Hellespont at the time of the Trojan war. When Troy fell, the road was open, and a wave of migration set in. As the western tribes pressed on, more and more of the inhabitants of Northern and Central Greece, under the common name of Aeolians, moved across to the islands and the coast where the Trojan power had prevailed. Thus arose a new centre of Greek life, particularly in the towns of Cyme on the Asiatic shore and Mytilene in the great island of Lesbos.

Later, under pressure of the Boeotian invasion, and then of the Dorian attack, Attica, a barren tract of land at best, and the island of Euboea became overcrowded with refugees, and another stream of emigrants set forth eastward across the sea. These people, known as the Ionians, occupied the Cyclades, the large islands of Chios and Samos, and such towns as Phocæa, Miletus, and Ephesus upon the Asiatic coast south of the Aeolian colonies. These Ionians mingled with the Asiatic races, and, though the Greek tongue prevailed and the settlers acknowledged their Greek kinship in the common festivals of Apollo in the sacred isle of Delos and of Poseidon at the Pan-Ionium near Ephesus, yet the Asiatic element and the softness of the climate gave to them a lower standard of morals and a notorious effeminacy.

Finally, some of the Dorians, trying to plunder the Peloponnese but finding little left to raid, continued their voyages

and settled down south of the Ionians. Crete they overran, and on Cnossus fell the final catastrophe. Rhodes too they occupied, and Cos and the south-west promontories of Asia Minor, where again they established the worship of the Dorian Apollo. The island of Cyprus, which at the time of the Achaeans had received both raiders and exiles from Crete, again became a home of refugees. These mingled with the previous inhabitants and Phoenician settlers and formed a civilisation which belonged to the East as well as to the West. Thus the map of Greece was changed, a threefold division of the tribes appears—Aeolian, Ionian, and Dorian, and the centre of Hellenic civilisation for some centuries was found on the Asiatic rather than the European shores of the Aegean Sea.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Who were the Hellenes?
3. Distinguish between the various invasions of Greece.
4. With what can you compare the Homeric Age?
5. What were the results of the Dorian invasion?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AGE OF COLONISATION

**Revival of prosperity.** Following upon the Dorian invasion, which we may consider as ended by 1000 B.C., and the reconstruction of the map of Greece which was thus caused, there followed three or four centuries—a long period, as long as from the Reformation to the present day—of which hardly any written record remains and the history can only be pieced together with difficulty. At first the inhabitants of both old and new Greek lands were rough invaders or poverty-stricken

refugees In either case the older culture had received a severe blow and time was needed for recovery Towards 800 B C, however, men had settled down, and prosperity showed its head once more

**Commercial centres** (a) **Asia Minor** This prosperity appeared in several spots, and was based upon the growth of trade First and foremost among the places which rose to importance was the land of the Asiatic Greeks Aeolis, the northern part, had been the longest settled, and in the island of Lesbos in particular there were flourishing communities But Aeolis was too near the Hellespont and the comings and goings of the various tribes who entered Asia by that route Moreover, only one small river valley, that of the Caicus, led down to the coast Thus, though prosperous in themselves, the towns of that district did not expand sufficiently to send out colonists across the sea

It was Ionia, further south, that attained pre-eminence in luxury and wealth This fact was mainly due to its geographical position From the interior of Asia Minor and its civilised kingdoms led down three rivers, the Hermus, rich in gold, and the Cayster and the Maeander, famous for their fertile valleys, with the towns of Phocaea, Ephesus, and Miletus at their respective mouths Of these the Hermus and Maeander valleys reached furthest inland Naturally they were the great highways of trade from the interior to the coast It is in front of Ionia, too, that the islands, starting with Samos, stretch away to Greece

At the south-west corner lay the Dorian colonies There, however, the mountains of the mainland are higher, nothing comes down naturally from the interior, the towns were dependent on trade as it passed along the coast from Cyprus to the north or across the islands to the west Rhodes, in virtue of its position, had the chief advantages

(b) **Greece** On the western side of the Aegean we must consider where the cautious mariner, feeling his way along from isle to isle, will reach the shores of Greece For we must bear in mind that the mariner of early days was very cautious



He had no compass, and so dared not lose sight of land, and his boat was small and open, so that he could not face a rough sea and at night usually went ashore to sleep. As has been already pointed out, the islands called the Cyclades stretch in two lines into the sea. One line is a continuation of Euboea, the other of Attica.

Following the northern line the mariner from Asia reached the end of Euboea. The outer side of the island was rocky, dangerous, and almost harbourless. Whether, then, he was bound for Central Greece or meant to continue his voyage further north, he must needs pass inside the straits. There at the narrowest part stood the cities of Chalcis and Eretria. Bitter rivals they were, and the commercial struggle ended in war and the victory of Chalcis. But each had allies on the Asiatic shore, and in this struggle Samos, as the ally of Chalcis, and Miletus, as the friend of Eretria, played their parts. Obviously, then, Samos to Chalcis and Miletus to Eretria were the routes of trade. In either case Euboea was reached, and when the kings of Lydia invented coined money, based on a Babylonian standard of weights, this standard was adopted throughout half of Greece and known as the Euboean.

The southern line of islands reached to Attica, and thence trade passed up the Saronic Gulf towards the Isthmus for the west. Here too was a group of commercial states equally bitter in their rivalry, Megara and Corinth competing for the Isthmian trade, and the island of Aegina, like Samos in front of Miletus, trying to take at least the eastern trade from both. At Megara, in spite of her two ports, one east, one west, the Isthmus is wider and blocked by a mass of mountain. Hence the struggle came to be fought out between Corinth and Aegina. They took opposite sides in the war which separated Chalcis and Eretria. Corinth was secure at least in the trade of the Corinthian Gulf, which came from the west, and in anger with her rival adopted the Euboean standard, Aegina commanded the eastern route and introduced to Greece the Aeginetan standard, likewise in use in

Lydia, but borrowed from a Phoenician source and indicating the lands with which she did most trade

These, then, were the most important commercial centres of the Hellenic world in the eighth century, and it was from these states in particular that there flowed a wave of colonisation which was to reach to the recesses of the Black Sea and to the coasts of Spain

**Political and social causes of colonisation.** Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that commercial expansion was the only cause of colonisation. As wealth grew and the arts of peace began to replace the love of war, a political change took place which is noticeable in the history of many states besides those of Greece. The prime duty of the Homeric king was to lead the tribe in war, in military operations the paramount necessity is discipline and obedience. But in peace the king's authority is weakened, there is little occasion for his services as general, even a man of inferior physique, and therefore commanding less respect, will be enough. In matters of justice and politics the king's advisers are men of greater age and experience. All that is left to him is the titular headship with the sacred office of priest, whilst even there, as temples are built and the cults of new gods introduced, a class of priests arises to share with him his duties and his reverence. The power passes into the hands of nobles, who, as heads of families, own the land. They call themselves "the best" and their government the "rule of the best", or "aristocracy". Families may die out, their land passes to those who are left. The small owner may meet with financial difficulty, he borrows from his wealthy neighbour, he cannot repay, and his land and often his person go to discharge the debt. Thus the aristocracy becomes narrower, no new families are admitted, only birth will count, and the rule of the best becomes "oligarchy", the "rule of the few". But as their numbers grow smaller, their wealth and their pride grow greater. The poor, on the other hand, are oppressed, miserable, and dissatisfied, their numbers increase, there is no room for them at home. They are born of an adventurous and much-travelled race, they must seek



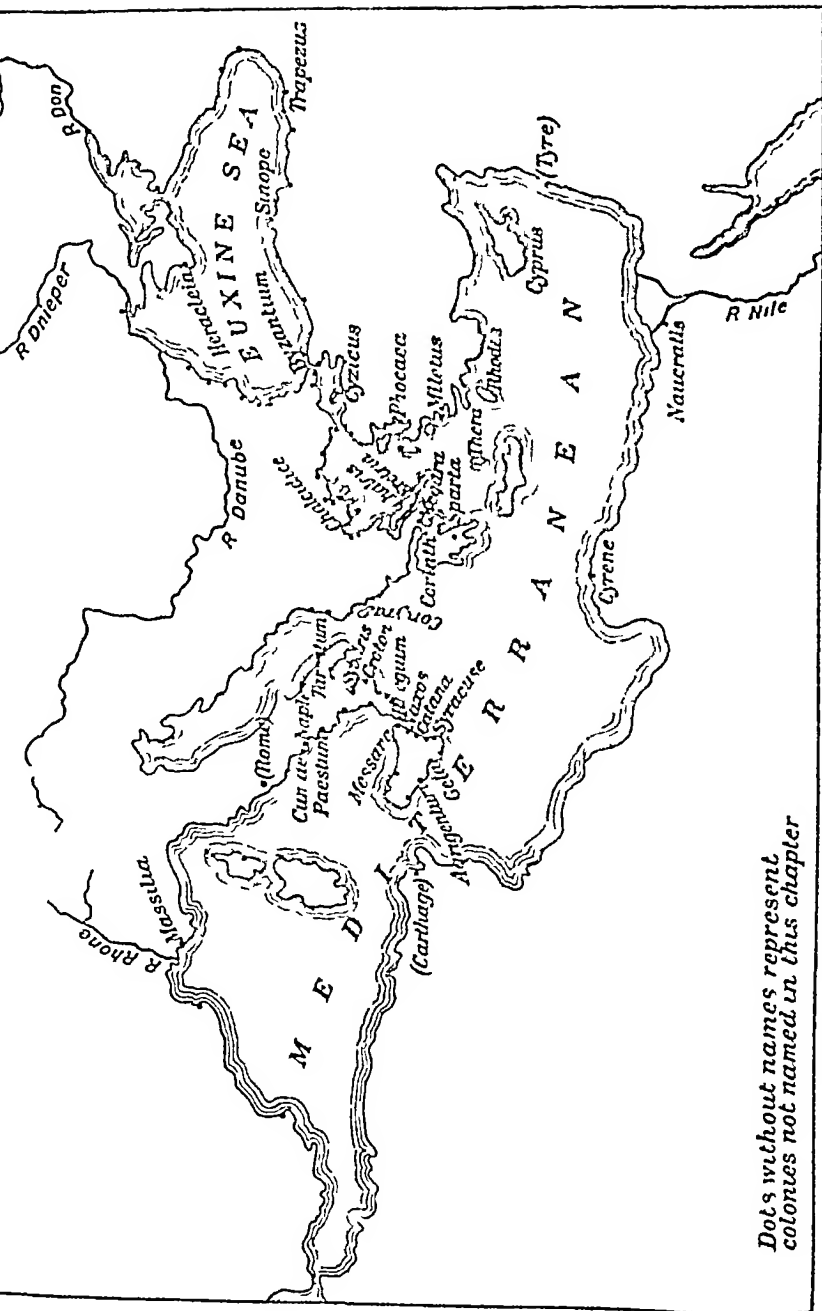
new homes Behind them are the mountains; in front of them is the sea with islands in sight, the ships come from over the water and bring wealth from foreign lands, let them too fare over the ocean and seek in other lands a living, nay wealth, which nature and man deny them at home Here was the second factor in colonisation

**Opportunity for colonisation** Thirdly, we must bear in mind that the times too were favourable In the days of Solomon, the age of the Dorian invasion, the ships of Hiram, king of Tyre, had gone forth into all parts and usurped the trade which had once belonged to the Aegean race The Phoenicians established their trading factories and worked the mines wherever wealth might be gathered But, from 800 B C onwards, Tyre and Sidon fell upon evil days The Assyrian power of Nineveh had spread to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the Phoenician cities were forced to pay tribute Again and again they revolted but were reduced to subjection Thus the trade in the western Mediterranean passed into the hands of their great colony, Carthage, that of the eastern basin was open to the Greeks We must distinguish the colonial movement from the migrations which preceded it The earlier impulse had come from outside, when fresh highland tribes came pressing on the lowlands and drove the inhabitants to fly across the sea, the later movement was the result of causes working from within, commercial expansion and enterprise combined with social and political discontent The tempting opportunity was provided by the weakening of Phoenicia

**Colonies in the Aegean** Now let us see into what parts the Greek emigrants penetrated The earliest colonies of all were made within the Aegean Sea Soon after 800 B C the two great Euboean towns of Chalcis and Eretria sent out settlers to the three-pronged headland which, like a toasting-fork, projects from Macedonia At home they had developed the mines of their own island, and they were thus attracted to the new district by its mineral wealth So numerous were the settlements that soon the whole region was known as Chalcidice Among these Ionic settlements was a city called

Potidaea, a colony from Doric Corinth, which we have already seen to be commercially connected with Chalcis. Of this town we shall hear more anon.

**Colonies in the Black Sea** The original tale of the *Argo*, which sailed from Iolcus in Thessaly, was perhaps an echo of the first emigration to the shores of Aeolis, but the details of the voyage of the Argonauts no doubt reflect the adventures of the first Greek mariners who sailed into the waters of the "Pontus", or Black Sea. Compared with the calmer Aegean its waves were dangerous, and the Greeks called it the "Axeinos", "the unfriendly one". Presently, as they grew more familiar with it, whether from a desire to appease its waves or whether from the wealth it brought to them, they renamed it "Euxeinos", or "the friendly one". Miletus claimed to have been the pioneer and to have founded Cyzicus in 756 B.C. upon the Asiatic shore of the Sea of Marmora, or "Propontis". Once firmly established in this and other towns the Milesians spread into the Black Sea itself, and before 700 B.C. they founded Sinope on the southern coast, to be in its turn the mother-city of Trapezus. These and a number of smaller towns developed the fisheries and the trade in timber, iron, copper, and gold, which came from the southern and eastern shores. The northern shore was, and still is, a vast and fertile corn-land, one of the granaries of the world. Down the Volga and the lower Don came gold and minerals from the Urals, and furs from the tribes of the north, down the Dnieper came Baltic amber, with which Thales of Miletus made the first experiments in electricity. To develop this wealth the Milesians founded another series of towns, fringing the northern shores, while on the west, near the Danube mouth, rose another group of settlements. Other cities of Ionia copied this example and made settlements in Thrace and about the Dardanelles, or "Hellespont", but Miletus was the most prominent, and presently the Euxine became a Milesian sea. The Dorian town of Megara was the only serious competitor. Realising the importance of the Bosphorus, after 700 B.C. its citizens



*Dots without names represent colonies not named in this chapter*

MAP 3 THE GREEK COLONIES AND THEIR MOTHER CITIES

founded the famous city of Byzantium, to be rebuilt a thousand years later as Constantinople, and in the Crimea they established the town of Heracleia, which we know as Sebastopol

**Colonies in Italy.** Now we must turn our attention to the west. The *Odyssey*, whenever it was composed, shows that the regions of Italy and Sicily were more or less known to the Greeks, and probably their voyages in that direction were made some time before there were any colonies. Whether this knowledge was their own or whether it came to them through the Phoenicians, at any rate by the time the Milesian colonies were being planted in the Black Sea the Hellenic towns were springing up in the west. Once again it was Chalcis and Eretria that were first in the field. Tradition says that before 1000 B.C. they had planted the first colony of the west at Cumae, it is more reasonable, however, to suppose that it belongs to a date after 800 B.C., the time when settlers were going to Chalcidice. At any rate Cumae was the first, and thence was colonised the still more famous Naples. This settlement of Cumae was of the utmost importance, for it was the most northerly Greek town upon the Italian coast and it gave to the Romans the alphabet and their first acquaintance with Greek civilisation.

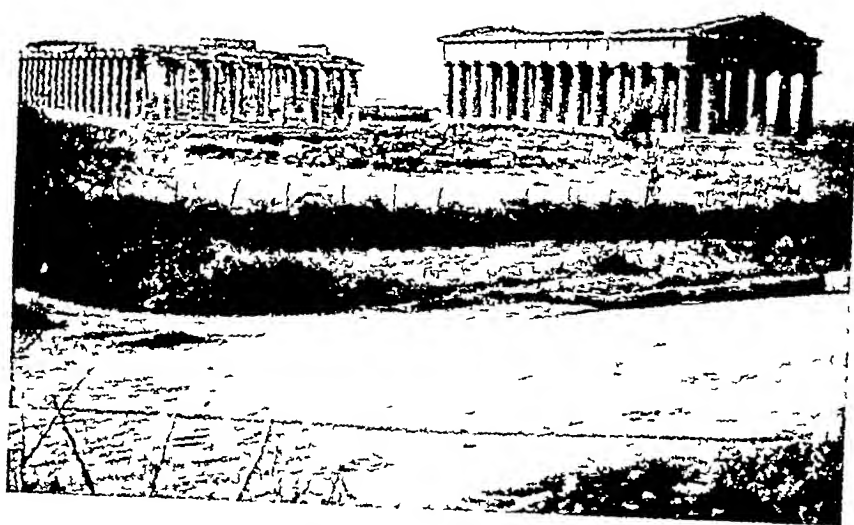
On the eastern shores of the toe of Italy was another group of colonies, which were founded by men from the Achaean shores of the Corinthian Gulf. The first of these was Sybaris, which grew wealthy through the countless sheep that fed upon the fertile plain. Soon she developed a line of trade overland and planted colonies on the western side, of which Poseidonia (Paestum) is best known. Many a merchant, fearing the dangers of the straits of Messina or the rivalry of that town itself, preferred to use this overland route. A similar fortune awaited Croton, the second Achaean colony, she too planted others on the western shores and drew overland trade, she too fattened upon the rich plains. Before the end of the sixth century these two cities reached a size and wealth which completely dwarfed into insignificance the towns of Greece.

itself, probably only Miletus of the homeland towns could in any way compare with them, and in Sybaris so great was the extravagance that the name "Sybarite" has become proverbial for one who loves luxurious ease

In Croton, in the sixth century, lived the famous philosopher Pythagoras. His peculiar teachings about the transmigration of souls and the mysterious properties of numbers attracted numerous disciples in the wealthy cities, where the simple worship of the Olympian deities offered little scope to intellectual life. His followers were organised in brotherhoods, which presently became political clubs. At Croton they seized the power and admitted only members to a share in the government. Sybaris, however, at the time was governed by a despot, the natural enemy of such clubs. This opposition and commercial jealousy led to a war between the two cities. Huge armies were put in the field, far bigger than any ever mustered by the Greeks at home. In the year 510 B.C. Milo of Croton, the famous athlete, completely crushed the Sybarites in battle, and followed up his victory by destroying the city and scattering its inhabitants.

Only one other town could compete with these two in wealth. That was Taras (Tarentum), the only Spartan colony. The foundation was the outcome of domestic trouble. She too grew to prosperity through agricultural and pastoral wealth as well as through trade and her great woollen and dyeing industries. These were the three most famous of a line of towns which studded the southern coast of Italy and gave it the name of "Great Hellas".

**Colonies in Sicily** Meanwhile the Greek sailors had crossed the straits to Sicily and planted another line of towns, especially along its eastern shore. Here again the Chalcidians were the pioneers, and with some men of Naxos in the year 735 B.C. founded the town of Naxos at the foot of Aetna. Within a few years had sprung up a number of towns, the most notable of which was Zancle, better known by its later name of Messana (Messina). This was bound to be of importance as possessing an excellent harbour and guarding the



Temples at Paestum



passage of the straits Rhegium too, on the Italian side, was founded at the same time

Southwards of these sprang up a Dorian group of colonies In the year after the foundation of Naxos, a Corinthian exile led out a band of emigrants to Sicily, where they made themselves a home at Syracuse, the best harbour and the strongest fortress that the island affords, and founded the most famous city of the west But some half-way station was necessary, and so the Corinthians seized from some Eretrian settlers the large island of Corcyra (Corfu) on the western shores of Greece, where all ships must pass on their way to and from Italy This in its turn became the mother of a number of Corinthian towns upon the coast of Epirus Following the example of their kinsmen and rivals, the Megarians too turned their attention to the west, and the Rhodians planted the colony of Gela, which was soon to be eclipsed by its daughter-city of Acragas (Agrigento), both near to the southern shore Only at the extreme western end of the island were no Greek cities found, there the Carthaginians had their foothold, and thence trouble was to come for the Greeks As with the cities of Italy, so in Sicily the Greeks owed their prosperity not merely to trade but also to the fertility of the land, and thus some of the colonies of these parts were led to increase their territories towards the interior and to bring under their vassalage the native tribes

**Colonies in Gaul and Spain** One other set of western colonies deserves to be mentioned Though the Milesians had no settlements in the west and contented themselves with commercial relations with such towns as Sybaris, yet the Ionians of Asia Minor here too played their part The town of Phocaea had taken a comparatively small share in the Black Sea enterprise, but she put forth her best efforts towards the setting sun Sailing through the straits of Messina, her colonists defied the jealousy of Carthage and the piracy of Etruria, and established themselves in Corsica as a stepping-stone, and ultimately at Massilia (Marseilles) Here they drew through the Rhone valley all the trade from Britain and the north, and



gathered wealth from minor stations which they planted even on the coast of Spain

**Colonies in Africa** It still remains to speak of Greek enterprise in Africa Due south of Crete lies a projecting bit of Libya Long centuries before, in the raiding days, Achaeans had reached the land and combined with the Libyans in an attack upon Egypt, but no permanent settlement had been effected However, in 633 B C the islanders of Thera, helped by other Dorians, sailed to this land and, inter-marrying with the natives, succeeded in establishing the prosperous state of Cyrene The district, like much of the North African coast before the ravages of the Saracens and Turks, was fertile and was said to produce corn three hundred-fold, the downs inland fed flocks and herds, and great wealth was amassed from the export of a certain medicinal herb, silphium, which was much in demand and found nowhere else

About the same time, too, Egypt, after a period of decay and subjection to Assyria, rose to power under king Psammetichus He employed mercenaries, drawn partly from Ionia Hitherto foreigners had been rigorously excluded from the land But now the countrymen of the imperial guard were permitted access to the sacred river, and, headed once more by the Milesians, founded a Greek bazaar at Naucratis, some fifty miles up the western mouth of the Nile, a place which in situation and commercial prosperity bears a close resemblance to Calcutta or Canton

**Character of Greek colonies** In character the Greek colonies bore some resemblance to our own, but the likeness is by no means complete The adventurous spirit reminds us of the sea-dogs of the Elizabethan age, the development of trade has its parallel in the story of the East India Company, dissatisfaction with affairs at home produced the New England colonies, and is causing the present exodus to Canada and Australia Amongst the Greeks, the founder of the colony took fire from the public hearth of the mother-city, the "metropolis", and a filial bond of affection always bound the daughter-city to the original home But the first thing for the settlers on

their arrival was to found a city-state, the characteristic feature of Greek life. The Phoenician founded his trading port, the Briton emigrates to go upon the land, but the Greek could not live without his city. Another point of difference lies in the fact that the Greek colony was always a private venture, as indeed are ours at first, and, except in the case of one or two Corinthian towns, was never the possession of the mother-city. It governed itself, and generally, in its rivalries and wars, by itself had to stand or fall. The colonies, however, were not frequently at war, there was usually room for all, the majority only wanted space for a city and its environs, it was against their interests to stir up war with the natives, and the natives in their turn were usually quick to see the advantages which the presence of the strangers brought. Such war as there was arose more often out of rivalry with neighbouring Greeks in a district where the colonies were thickly planted. Since a city was the first necessity, a considerable number of emigrants were wanted. Often one town could not supply enough, and therefore bands from two or three places would combine to make a common settlement. Under such circumstances all were equal, and the government of the colony was inclined to be "of the people", or "democratic". As wealth increased, power tended to fall into the hands of the wealthy few or was usurped by one ambitious citizen, but the spirit of the people was democratic, and after a period of faction fights the government usually returned to democracy again. One last point remains to be noted. The colonists came from homes close by the sea, their journey was made by sea, and by the sea they planted their colonies.

**Pan-Hellenism** Thus we see Hellenic civilisation planted throughout the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, and its influence felt in regions as remote as Britain. In return, through these colonies trade was drawn to Greece from every part of the then known world. Naturally enough, on the far distant shores of Spain or of the Black Sea the community of language, of manners, and of religion was very strongly felt, and the further from home or the more pressing the danger

from outside, the stronger was the tie of kinship. Thus arose among the colonies at even this early date a spirit of "Pan-Hellenism", which in Greece itself was obscured by the jealousies of the petty states. But even in Greece too the spirit existed, and centred itself in two places, both connected with religion.

**Delphi.** The first of these was Delphi, the oracle of Apollo, the most sacred spot in Greece. Delphi is situated under the southern cliffs of Mount Parnassus, overlooking a deep, narrow valley and the Corinthian Gulf. Westwards the valley opens into the road which leads from the Gulf to Northern Greece. Thus access is easy by sea from the Peloponnese and from the west, and not difficult from the north. Eastward the valley leads into the plains of Phocis and Boeotia. Delphi is therefore most centrally placed and equally open to all the Hellenic world. When an enquiry was made of the god, the questioner addressed himself to the priests. The maiden priestess drank of the sacred spring and took her seat upon a tripod over a chasm in a cave. Apparently the vapours which arose from the ground reduced her to a state of trance or frenzy. The priests of Apollo then put the question to her and listened to her unconscious words. These they rendered into hexameter verse and gave to him who had sought advice. Other oracles there were in Greece, but that of Apollo at Delphi had the highest reputation. Now the founding of a Greek colony was a religious matter, and, before the plan was executed, the sanction and advice of Apollo were invariably sought. The priests of Delphi, owing to their interviews with enquirers on all matters, private and political, from every part of the Hellenic world, had an unrivalled knowledge of affairs and were in a better position than anyone else to give advice. They used their information with wisdom, tact, and due observance of morality. When their knowledge was certain they gave direct advice, when they were in doubt, they couched the god's reply in ambiguous terms, so that if the wrong course was adopted the fault lay with the blindness of the enquirer who had interpreted the answer wrongly, in any



### Delphi

(The sacred buildings are on the left under the cliffs of Mt Parnissus in the centre)

The sacred spring of Castalia issues from the ravine



case the god was right. Thus the oracle acquired great fame and wealth, even foreigners consulted it, and to the Greeks it was a religious centre and a bond of union.

**Olympia.** The other centre of Greek life was at Olympia. In the Hellenic mind athletic games were intimately connected with the worship of the gods. Even the funeral of an Homeric hero was accompanied by games. There were tribal festivals, such as that of all Ionians for the worship of Apollo at Delos, and that of Athene at Athens. There were "Amphictyonies" also, religious associations of neighbouring tribes for common worship. The most famous of these was that of Demeter at Thermopylae, the council of which presently regulated the Delphian festival of Apollo too, and claimed to be regarded as the representative religious assembly of Greece. But whether funereal, tribal, or Amphictyonic, all such gatherings were "holidays" as well as "holy days", the deity was honoured with games as well as sacrifice. But four such festivals, that of Pythian Apollo at Delphi, that of Nemean Zeus in Argolis, that of Isthmian Poseidon hard by Corinth, and, above all, that of Olympian Zeus in Elis by the sacred waters of the Alpheus,—these reached the dignity of Pan-Hellenic gatherings. Of them the Olympic festival was at once the oldest and the greatest, and stands as a type of the rest. The origin of the Olympic games is lost in legend and obscurity, but from 776 B.C. onwards a list of victors was kept, and such importance was attached to the meeting that these records served as a system of chronology for the Hellenic race. Once every four years a sacred truce for a month was proclaimed by the heralds, and observed, and there swarmed to the meeting-place Greeks from every part of the world. On the north was the sacred hill of Cronus, clothed with olive trees, between it and the river lay the "Altis", the sacred enclosure, crowded with buildings, statues, and treasures under the protection of the god, and dominated by the temple of Olympian Zeus, to the eastward were the stadium and the hippodrome in which the games took place. None but Greeks, none but men and boys were admitted. All competitors had to prove their Hellenic birth and to show that they had

trained for ten months beforehand, the final month being spent at Olympia. The original race was the "stadium", the short foot-race of about 200 yards. Other contests were added—running, jumping, wrestling, boxing, javelin-throwing, and the hurling of the quoit, there were races with horses, with chariots, and with mule-cars, thither came poets, orators, and writers of prose to recite and publish their poems, their speeches, and their histories, thither came men whose only wish was to make display. To be seen or heard at Olympia was to be seen and known by Greece. The winners were escorted home in triumph by their fellow-countrymen, and loaded with honour, with gifts, and with privileges. But it was the victor of the "stadium" who was the greatest man of Greece and gave his name to the Olympiad, his reward from the judges was—a wreath of wild olive.

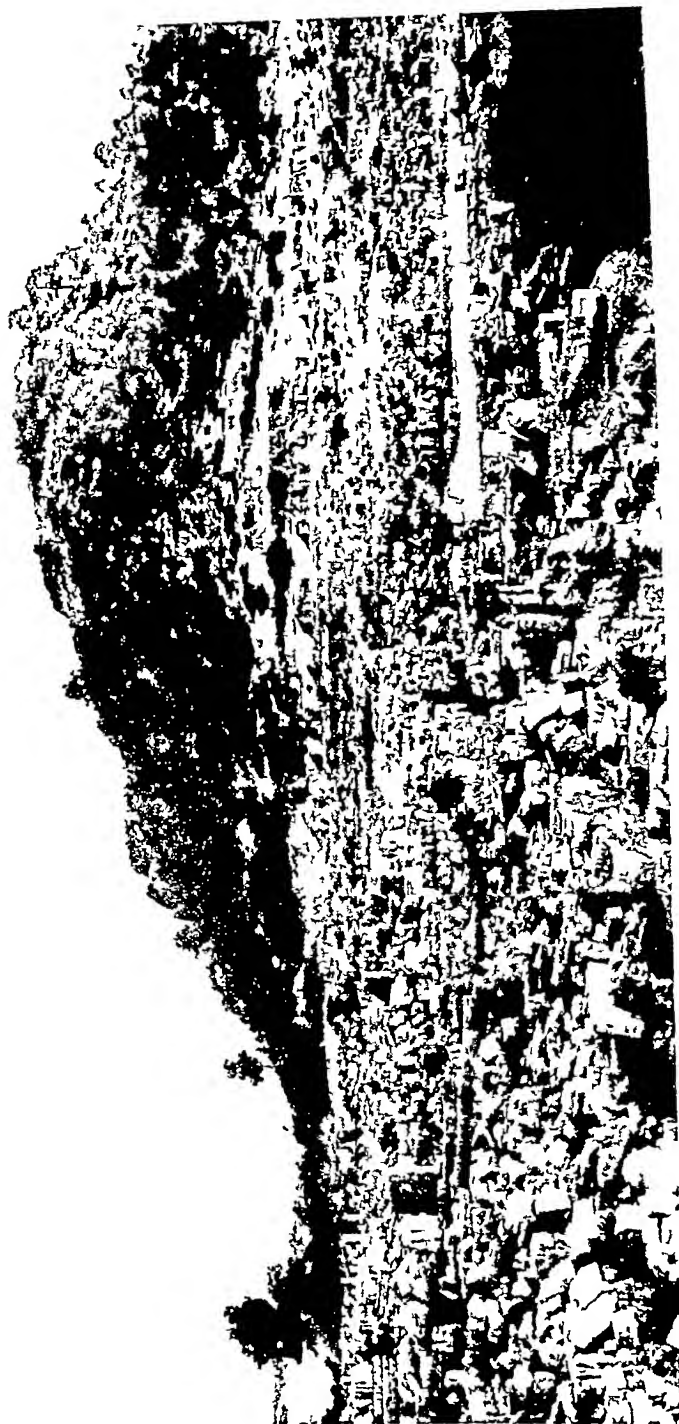
#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 What is the natural order of changes of government?
- 3 What were the chief causes of colonisation?
- 4 Compare Greek and English colonies
- 5 What bonds of unity were there among Greeks?
- 6 What was the influence of Greek colonisation upon (a) the Greeks, (b) the rest of the world?

## CHAPTER V

### THE RISE OF SPARTA

**Lack of records** If the history of the maritime Greek cities on both sides of the Aegean and of their colonial enterprise is somewhat vague, our knowledge of affairs in continental Greece is even more obscure. It is not until 600 B.C. that we can place the dates of men and events with any certainty. But little though we know of details which are credible, we



*Olympia*

(View of the ruins from the south The hill of Cronus is in the background)





have at least an outline of the steps by which the Spartan power grew to be predominant in the Peloponnese and famed across the seas

**Dorians in Argolis.** The Dorian conquest of the Peloponnese, as has been already indicated, was a gradual process in three areas, Messenia, Laconia, and Argolis. The events which took place in Elis, Arcadia, and Achaea were of no importance to Greek history and must in a book of this size be ignored

First we must turn our attention to Argolis. Here it is probable that the invasion took place from the sea. Mycenae and Tiryns, the homes of Aegean and Achaeon civilisation, were sacked and sank to insignificance, while Argos rose to dominate the plain. But progress was not rapid, it was no easy matter to subdue the towns of the hill country that lay to the north and to the east. The ranks of the first invaders must have been thinned in the fighting, and it was not till their numbers were reinforced by fresh bands of their kinsmen that the victory was won. In the end, however, the whole district was in the hands of the Dorians. They subdued Troezen and Epidaurus and the island of Aegina, while northwards they occupied Sicyon and Corinth and pushed their conquests along the Isthmus, wresting even Megara from the men of Attica. But there they stopped. Of the old inhabitants some took refuge in Attica and were known as Ionians, some fled to Achaea along the southern shores of the Corinthian Gulf, and others found new homes even as far afield as Cyprus. Yet many remained behind, and seem to have mingled on fair terms with the conquerors. At least in Argos, in addition to the three tribes into which all Dorians were divided, we find a fourth, which probably represented the older population, while in Sicyon and Corinth a considerable Achaeon or Ionic element prevailed. Yet the Dorians were the ruling race.

Of the Dorian kingdoms Argos was at first the most important. In Achaeon days it had been the richest part of the Peloponnese, and nothing could deprive it of its geographical position on the route from east to west. It was Argos

therefore that was said to have taken part in the Dorian colonies of the south Aegean. But gradually the power of the Argive kings weakened. Aegina, Corinth, and Megara, with their commercial advantages, made themselves independent, the Spartans pressed hardly upon the Argives from the south, and the nobles encroached upon the power of the crown.

**Pheidon, c. 660 B.C. ?** The only Argive sovereign who is more than a mere name to us was Pheidon. His date is uncertain, but probably he reigned about 660 B.C. His first object was to break the power of "the few", or "the oligarchy", and restore the monarchy, and so successful was he that he was considered more of a despot or tyrant than a constitutional king, and the nobles were so weakened that Argos afterwards, more than any other Peloponnesian state, showed a leaning towards the "rule of the people", or "democracy". His authority established at home, he turned his attention to the other towns which had broken away. He reduced even Corinth and Aegina to a more or less dependent state, and as master of Aeginetan trade he was the first man in Greece to coin money, and he established the Aeginetan system of weights and measures. On the south at Hysiae he drove back and routed the Spartans who tried to invade the land, and by way of striking a blow at them he invaded the territory of their allies, the Eleians, and, defeating them both in battle, proceeded to help his friends of Pisa, the rivals of the Eleians, to celebrate the Olympic games. In order to do this he must have had a friendly, if not subject, Arcadia through which to pass.

**Struggles of Sparta and Argos** Upon his death in battle the royal power and the power of Argos alike decayed. The vassal towns became completely independent. Continual wars with Sparta ensued about the debatable land, the district of Thyrea, which lay between them, for Argos and Arcadia together barred the roads from Sparta to the outside world, and Argos held a strip of land which kept Sparta from the sea upon the east. It was a hundred years after Pheidon's death that in 546 B.C. was fought the famous battle of 300 Argive and

300 Spartan champions Only two Argives and one Spartan survived The Argives thought that every Spartan was slain, and went home with news of their victory, the Spartan stayed upon the field and piled up a trophy of the enemies' arms, the Greek sign of victory So enraged were the Argives that they resumed the war with all their forces, but were badly defeated, and Sparta remained mistress of the Peloponnese

Some forty years later came the final humiliation Cleomenes the Spartan king, unable to force the passes, borrowed ships and landed from the sea The Argives arranged their movements in accordance with those of the Spartans. Realising this the Spartans sounded the trumpet for dinner, but stood to their arms, the Argives set to their meal, and in the midst of it were surprised by the Spartan attack and utterly defeated An atrocious barbarity followed The fugitives took refuge in a sacred grove, and were there burnt alive or slain as they tried to escape Six thousand Argives lost their lives in the disaster, but the town, though now almost defenceless, was not taken, for Cleomenes was mad, neglected to capture it, and, after doing sacrifice as a sign of victory at the great temple of Hera, the most sacred spot in Argolis, went home But the power of Argos was shattered Ever afterwards, independent but second-rate, she remained aloof from whatever Sparta proposed, nursing her wrath and ready to do an ill turn to her ancient enemy

**Messenia** In Messenia the Dorian conquerors were not numerous, and apparently they mixed with the earlier population The Achaean royal house at Pylos on the western coast was said to have fled to Attica, at any rate the fruitful eastern plain now became the most important part Beyond an untrustworthy list of kings, we know nothing of Messenia until war broke out with Sparta in the middle of the eighth century. Of this, too, no sure details can be given

**First Messenian war** The legendary story described the war from the Messenian point of view Its hero was Aristodemus, who for twenty years resisted the Spartan invader, at first in the open plain and then in the mountain fastness of

Ithome It said how in obedience to an oracle he offered his own daughter for sacrifice to propitiate the gods, and finally in despair slew himself upon her tomb Then Ithome fell It also represented the Spartans as absent from home for twenty years Twenty years away and only twenty miles from home! This for the Spartan soldier who was known to march 150 miles in three days! No Greek campaign in Greece ever lasted more than a few weeks, many only a few days Such details, then, deter us from putting credence in the stories The war probably arose out of border raids and the desire of the Spartans, then increasing in power, for more fertile lands, for no plain in Greece is more fertile than Messenia After a prolonged series of summer campaigns or raids Ithome fell, and the fruitful plain passed into the Spartans' hands The Messenians either sought refuge in exile or stayed to till their soil, paying half of the produce to the conquerors

Second Messenian war Less than a hundred years later the second Messenian war broke out The Spartans were at that moment weakened by the rising power of Argos under Pheidon Encouraged by the news of the severe Spartan defeat at Hysiae, 669 B.C., the Messenians rose against their masters This time Eira, further north, was the mountain stronghold, and Aristomenes was the hero Of him many an heroic tale was told how, in order to strike terror among the enemy, with consummate daring he went to Sparta itself by night and there fastened up his own shield in the temple of Athene, how he was taken prisoner again and again, but always escaped, twice a maiden's love set him free, once he was thrown with others into a pit, where he alone survived the fall and three days later, by catching a fox and following it in its efforts to get away, thus found a crack in the rocks and escaped uninjured Again the war lasted a number of years At length, cheered on by the martial poems of Tyrtaeus, the Spartans triumphed over their ring of foes Eira was stormed, and the Messenians obtained terms Again those who wished went into exile, and eventually gave their name to the Sicilian town of Zancle, which became Messana

(Messina), those who stayed at home were completely reduced to the position of "Helots", or serfs. Messenia remained a danger to Sparta, but two hundred years were to elapse before another revolt occurred.

**Sparta.** It now remains to speak of the Lacedaemonians of Laconia and their town of Sparta. The Dorians, who had entered the valley of the Eurotas at its source, found their way blocked by various Achaean towns, in particular that of Amyclae. Northwards they were penned in by the Arcadians and north-eastwards by the Argives, while westwards their kinsmen had occupied Messenia. They had indeed forced their way in, but their numbers were small and no reinforcements came to their aid. Thus they had difficulty in supporting themselves even in the group of villages which they did hold, and which came to be known as Sparta. Hence no doubt it was that their settlement formed what it ever continued to be, an unfortified camp of armed men in the midst of a hostile population, and hence too it was that they kept themselves aloof and exclusive and rigidly adhered to their own peculiar customs.

In addition to having enemies on every side, they suffered too from trouble at home. They had a peculiar institution of a dual monarchy, the origin of which it is impossible to state with certainty. This naturally led to quarrels between the two royal families, and when the two kings did combine, they quarrelled jointly with their people. Under such conditions it was not likely that the Spartans would prosper.

**Lycurgus, c. 800 B.C.?** But the struggling state was saved by the appearance of the great law-giver, Lycurgus. His date is extremely uncertain; the stories of his life do not inspire belief, as usual, critics are not wanting to doubt his existence. But, as "Homer" means the Homeric poems, so the name of Lycurgus stands for a certain work, that work is the Spartan constitution. Kings, nobles, and people existed before his day; other institutions were introduced at a later time; and posterity fastened them all alike on to the great name, as the Jews grouped all their ordinances under the name of the

**Law of Moses** Probably Lycurgus lived about 800 B.C. Tradition said that he was a younger son of one of the royal houses, and that, in order to avoid the suspicion that he might seize power from his infant nephew, he travelled abroad for years. When he at length returned, matters were worse than ever, amid domestic strife and foreign war. At such a crisis all men turned to Lycurgus, who had the traveller's high reputation for knowledge and wisdom and was said to be commissioned by the Delphic oracle to save the state. Supported by twenty-eight of the wisest citizens he entered the market-place and gave forth his "Rhetae", or "sayings", which after some opposition were accepted.

**The Spartan constitution** (a) **Kings** Without attempting to disentangle the work of Lycurgus from that of others, let us look, as did the Greeks themselves, at Spartan institutions as a whole. At the head of the state were the kings, hereditary sovereigns of two separate lines, of equal authority and equal rights and privileges. As priests they offered certain sacrifices for the state, presided at religious ceremonies, and received a double portion of the food and offerings. As judges they retained few functions except in cases of adoption and of orphan heiresses. It was as warriors that they had most authority. This was bound to be the case in a state which was organised solely for military purposes. Commanders-in-chief, each with his guard of a hundred men, having powers of life and death, they had supreme direction in the field, and could, in theory, make war on any they chose. But for their conduct of it they were responsible to the people on their return. In later days, to avoid dissension, only one king at a time took the field. The king was more honoured, however, when he was dead. The body was always brought home, and the death was announced throughout the land. Every Spartan household supplied two mourners, a man and a woman, from the surrounding districts fixed numbers of subjects and serfs were bound to attend, and amidst general lamentation the dead king was praised as the best of his race. He was succeeded by the eldest son born since his accession, even if he were an infant.

(b) Senate. The "Gerousia", or senate, consisted of twenty-eight elected members, over sixty years of age, and the two kings. Each of the three Dorian tribes was divided into ten parts, and each division was represented by a senator. The only exceptions to election and age limit were the kings, who seem to have represented their own hereditary divisions. In this senate discussion of state affairs must have taken place, and it formed the highest court of law in criminal cases.

(c) People. The "Apella" was the assembly of all full Spartan citizens over thirty years old. It met at least once a month. Elections, and questions of peace and war, of treaties, and of the deposition of kings, came before it and were decided by the loudness of the "Ayes" and "Noes". Other speaking was forbidden except at the invitation of the officer presiding. The people were supreme. But in certain cases, apparently, if their decision was unsatisfactory the matter was referred back to the senate and the kings.

✓ (d) Ephors. These three parts of the constitution were common enough, but the fourth was peculiar to Sparta alone. During the first Messenian war, owing to the arrears of business caused by the absence of the kings, it was decided to appoint five "ephors", overseers or inspectors. In the first instance, no doubt, they were meant to be assistants to the kings and to carry out civil duties in the absence of the latter. Gradually, however, probably as the outcome of some collision between the kings and the assembly, they came to be regarded as the people's check upon tyranny. They were elected annually by the people, but were responsible to none. They could summon the assembly and preside. Two of them accompanied the king to war to watch his conduct, at the time they could not interfere, but on their return they could order his arrest and trial. Every month the kings swore before them to maintain the laws, and they in return swore to maintain the kings. They were police magistrates, they controlled the education of the young, and they could interfere with the public and private life of all, even of the kings. They could fine whom



they pleased In civil cases they were the final court If they disagreed among themselves, the majority decided Thus, though a limited monarchy in form, with the final decision in the hands of the people, the Spartan constitution formed a narrow oligarchy of five who held irresponsible power for a year It was a curious mixture indeed, yet this form of government lasted longer than any other in Greece

**Education** We now must consider the famous Spartan system of education Bearing in mind the final aim, Lycurgus devoted all his efforts to producing a military machine When a child was born it was taken before the elders if it was weakly or deformed it was no use to the state, and was carried off to the mountains of Taygetus to perish, if it was healthy it was delivered back to its mother's care, not from motives of kindness, but that the state might benefit At seven the boy was taken from home and placed at school. There began the series of hardships that made up a Spartan's life There was truth as well as sarcasm in the remark that his life was made so unpleasant for him that it was no wonder he threw it away in battle without regret He went bare-foot and, winter or summer, wore but a single garment or none, he slept upon rushes which he gathered for himself, his rations were small in order that he might add to them by theft But woe betide him if he was caught in the act! Punishment followed for the crime, not of stealing, but of being awkward enough to be caught Who has not heard of the boy who stole a fox and hid it under his shirt, and, when detained in conversation, let the animal gnaw at his stomach rather than drop it and betray his clumsiness? Floggings, hunger, and discomfort taught insensibility to pain, At a certain age the boy underwent a flogging at the altar of Artemis to see who could endure the longest, frequently he died under the lash rather than utter a sound Gymnastics and military exercises, music and dancing, were the main things he was taught, mental culture was confined at the most to the elements of reading and writing and the learning of warlike songs

When he was twenty he entered the barracks, and was

elected into one of the public messes of fifteen men each There he had to supply his fixed contribution of food every month—barley-meal, wine, figs, and cheese, meat was only for festivals He had to take his meals in public, not even the kings were exempt

At thirty a man was a full citizen and was expected to marry, and ignominious penalties were attached to him if he did not It was his duty to the state to beget children But family life he never had At first he saw his wife only at intervals, later he was permitted a house of his own, but even then, though he might sleep at home, he ate his meals in barracks, and his days were spent in drill Not till the age of sixty was he freed from military service

The girls indeed were brought up at home, but the state took notice of them too, and public exercises in running and wrestling were a necessary part of their training Sentiment and womanly feeling were repressed, till a "Spartan mother" became a by-word The object was the same, to produce a hardy and vigorous race, Elsewhere in Greece women were secluded, in Sparta they were free

Perioeci and Helots Money, except in the form of iron bars, was expressly forbidden It was perhaps because of this that Spartans were notoriously susceptible to bribes Trade and commerce did not exist, no Spartan had time for anything but preparation for war But every Spartan had an allotment of land and serfs enough to till it, and it was from this that he made his contribution to the mess When the Spartans conquered the country they left many towns, mainly Achaean, more or less independent, each with its own land The inhabitants of these were called "Perioeci", the "dwellers round about" It was their duty to pay tribute and supply heavy-armed infantry, or "hoplites", when the Spartans went to war Otherwise they were left to themselves, and engaged in trade and agriculture on their own account Nor do they seem to have been discontented with the Spartan rule But the mass of the agricultural population were reduced to the position of serfs, or "Helots" Probably they had been inferiors under

the Achaeans. They had to till the soil for their Spartan masters and supply a fixed amount of produce, but the rest they might keep for themselves, in war they were bound to follow their masters as light-armed troops, and they were utterly destitute of political rights. The Spartans were, with reason, always afraid of a Helot revolt, and young Spartans were often sent through the country as secret police to kill off any Helots who were considered dangerous.

**Efficiency** Thus, then, the Spartans were disciplined, organised, and always ready for war, while no other state in Greece had anything but a citizen army. No wonder their reputation stood high, and, when their system was perfected, few dared hope to withstand them in the field.

**Spartan conquests** **Messenian wars** Thus organised according to the system of Lycurgus, the Spartans set out to conquer the Peloponnese. By 750 B.C. they had succeeded in making themselves masters of all Laconia, and at last their territory had reached to the sea. Having thus won for themselves comparative safety at home, they cast covetous eyes upon the rich lands of their neighbours in Messenia. In Laconia itself there was scarcely enough land to support Spartans as well as Perioeci and Helots. Thus it was that at the end of the first Messenian war, about 725 B.C., the Spartans reduced most of the conquered to the position of Helots and carved out other estates for themselves. The war produced changes in Sparta itself. The frequent absence of the kings caused the institution of the ephors, as has been already related. Secondly, the decrease of the numbers of the Spartans through war led to marriages of the Spartan women with Perioeci. The Spartans, however, refused to recognise these marriages as lawful, and contemptuously named the sons "Partheniae", the "maidens' children". Discontented with their inferior position these men engaged in a plot. This was discovered and the conspirators were driven from Laconia. They wandered over the sea and became the founders of Tarentum in Italy, 708 B.C.

**Alliance with Elis** As owners of Messenia the Spartans

had new neighbours, the people of Elis, who had entered the Peloponnese with the Dorians. With them they formed an alliance. The Spartans wanted help against Arcadia, the Eleians were ever struggling with the men of Pisa for the management of the Olympic games.

**Argive and Arcadian wars** But now the Spartans received a check from the rising power of Pheidon of Argos. In 669 B.C., when trying to invade Argolis, they were beaten at Hysiae by the Argives (see p. 44), and next year with their allies they were beaten in Elis when Pheidon went thither to celebrate the games. The Messenians seized the moment and rose in revolt. The following years were a time of great danger to the Spartans, for Argives and Arcadians ravaged Laconia itself. But they fought grimly on. Pheidon died, the Arcadian league broke up in jealousy, the Messenians were reduced to submission, soon after 650 B.C. Sparta was left victorious.

Sparta was now determined to force for herself a road out of the Peloponnese. To attain this end the Arcadians must be attacked. For many years campaigns, for the most part unsuccessful, were undertaken at intervals. At length Tegea, which blocked the exit, fell, and the Arcadian towns became subject-allies. Then followed campaigns against Argos, and the way was finally cleared in 546 B.C. by the battle of the 600 champions, of which the story has been told above. Yet even before this Sparta was in alliance with Corinth and Sicyon. In those two towns tyrants of the non-Dorian race had sprung up and crushed the Dorian oligarchy. But in 583 B.C. and 560 B.C. respectively the tyrants were overthrown and the Dorians regained the ascendancy. To secure their position they joined the Spartan alliance, for Sparta was the champion of oligarchy and the sworn foe of tyranny. The Megarians too followed their example. Thus by the middle of the sixth century Sparta had won the military leadership, or "hegemony", of the Peloponnese. More she did not desire. It was only in Messenia and Laconia that she owned the land and ruled, that the rest should be her allies was enough for her, a powerless Argos alone stood aloof.

**Spartan reputation** The institutions of Lycurgus had produced their desired result. In the seventh century Sparta had poets such as the warlike Tyrtaeus, recent excavations have shown that then she reached the highest point that she attained in art. After 600 B.C. the freedom of art and literature was crushed out of existence beneath the iron heel of military precision. But her reputation in arms spread even to Asia. Croesus of Lydia, guided by the Delphic oracle, was glad to make an alliance with Sparta as the foremost state in Greece. The Ionians of Asia Minor, when hard pressed by Cyrus the Persian king, applied, though in vain, for help. And a few years later some Samian exiles, driven out by their tyrant Polycrates, actually induced the Spartans to send their first expedition across the sea.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Trace the growth of Spartan power.
4. Give an account of the Spartan system of training.
5. Why were Spartans extremely conservative?

## CHAPTER VI

### TYRANNY

Monarchy, aristocracy, and oligarchy It has already been pointed out that in all Greek states the first form of government was constitutional monarchy, that is to say, the rule of the king limited by the power of a council of nobles and an assembly of all the free citizens. It has also been shown that everywhere the power of the king declined and was replaced by the power of the nobles, who called their rule

"aristocracy", the "rule of the best", and governed according to custom, which they alone could interpret, and did interpret in their own interests. The nobles were the great landowners. Gradually, as death extinguished some families, debt pressed on others, or grasping violence prevailed, the land came to be held by an ever diminishing number, who jealously guarded their ownership and refused to admit to a share in power any who were not of equal birth. A closed ring of families such as this was known as an "oligarchy", the "rule of the few". Often, as the result of the early invasions, there was already a subject population, sometimes more or less independent, as were the Perioeci of Sparta, more often in the position of serfs, like the Helots. To this was added an ever-growing swarm of citizens ruined by debt, misfortune, or the violence of the nobles. The Boeotian poet Hesiod gives us a vivid picture of the miseries of the time, 750 B.C., and bewails that his lot has fallen "in the iron age". In his day society was mainly agricultural, and the discontent was chiefly owing to the unequal distribution of land and power based upon landed wealth.

**Growth of wealth.** We have seen that a partial remedy was found in the development of commerce and the growth of colonies. But commercial expansion brought worse evils in its train. Industries and manufactures arose, and the labour most easily procured and managed for these was that of slaves, not slaves of the Homeric days who were regarded, often with affection, as members of the household, but slaves who were treated as mere beasts of burden to be bought and worked. Meanwhile the owners disdained labour and amassed wealth.

**Party strife and codes of law.** Trouble arose between the aristocracy of birth and the unprivileged wealthy class, and party strife grew bitter. At such a crisis some towns found an honest citizen whose name was held in respect, and invited him to arbitrate between the parties. Of this type was Solon at Athens. The result was a definite, written code of laws and the admission of commercial wealth to share the power with landed birth. In other cities no arrangement

could be reached, and violence alone could settle the questions at issue. The bitterness of the civil dissensions is well shown by the verse of the poets who flourished at the time, and it was well for the Greeks that no foe appeared, to threaten danger from outside.

**Oligarchy of wealth** But even where aristocracy had been replaced by "timocracy" or "plutocracy", the "rule of the rich", matters were little better. The poor remained poor, and it is notorious that none are so offensive to the lower orders as the *nouveaux riches*. The more wealthy the city, the worse was the state of affairs. In an agricultural district the poor were outside the town, spread over the land and existing in hopeless apathy, and there was little opportunity for combination. In a large commercial city with a big discontented population of natives and foreigners, freemen and slaves, with endless opportunities for meeting and discussion of their wrongs, the situation was infinitely more dangerous.

**Tyranny** Thus, with bitter enmity between birth and wealth, between rich and poor, aggravated as it often was by race-hatred, there were many opportunities for a determined man to win the power for himself. Posing as the champion of the wronged he led their forces against the oppressors, and if victory crowned his efforts it needed little skill to change the triumph of his grateful supporters into his own personal rule. The uncontrolled despot who thus suddenly and unconstitutionally arose was known to the Greeks as a "tyrant". Such was the course of events in many Greek states. Nor has it been unknown in the later history of Europe, notably in the case of Florence and other Italian city-republics, where the conditions resembled those of Greece.

Since, then, tyranny was a regular stage in Greek political development, we may expect to find tyrants in many Greek states about the same time. This was to some extent the case, and the seventh and sixth centuries in particular were the age of tyranny, but as some states were later in their development, so in some the tyrants belonged to later centuries, and in some cities tyrants never appeared at all.

**Character of tyrants** The word tyrant has an ugly sound. We must not, however, be misled into the idea that a tyrant was therefore a bad man. To the Greeks the word meant merely a despotic ruler. It is true that Phalaris of Agragas, who roasted his victims in a brazen bull, was a monster of cruelty, and tradition has loved to dwell upon the brutality of Periander of Corinth, who was said to have kicked his wife to death. But we must remember that most of the early writers belonged to the aristocrats, and therefore delighted in conveying a false impression of the enemy of their order, while, even to the Greek of the lower classes with his love of freedom, there was something objectionable in the idea of a ruler whose position was irregular and whose power was arbitrary and violent. Some of the tyrants ruled without military force and relied solely upon their popularity with the masses. They beautified their cities and were patrons of art and literature, they developed commerce and made treaties with foreign states, they began to build up empires. With many cities the most famous and prosperous period was the time of tyranny. Even if a tyrant was stern and cruel, it was better to suffer from one master than from many. The power of the aristocrats was broken, it was they who were humiliated, and in proportion to their decline the importance of the lower classes rose. The rule of the tyrants never lasted long. Only in one case, at Sicyon, did the power continue in one family for a hundred years. If the ruler had no bodyguard he was liable to attack at any moment by the aristocrats, if he had an army he was suspected and hated by the people, however well a man himself ruled, one of his successors was sure to be weak or else to abuse his unlimited power. In any case there was only one man to be removed, and then, sooner or later, the way lay open to "democracy", the "rule of the people".

**Sicyon** Now it is time to consider some typical tyrants. Sicyon was a town of some importance close to the southern shore of the Corinthian Gulf, so situated that it, together with Argos, provided a trade route from west to east which could



in some measure rival Corinth. But besides its advantageous position in this respect, it was fortunate in possessing a small river and a fertile soil. It was conquered by Dorians from Argos, but retained a large Ionic or Achaean element, who amassed wealth by the trade which the warlike Dorians despised. Before the middle of the seventh century a certain Orthagoras, probably a champion of the subject race, succeeded in establishing himself as tyrant. Of him and his immediate successors we know little, but the most famous of his house was his great-grandson.

**Cleisthenes** Cleisthenes came to the throne soon after 600 B.C. and reigned for thirty-one years. His chief object was to destroy all Dorian influence in the city and to break as completely as possible all connection with Argos. To achieve this end he suppressed the worship of the old Argive hero Adrastus, forbade recitations of Homer, in whose poems the Argives figured so largely, and changed the names of the three Dorian tribes into "the Swine", "the Donkeys", and "the Pigs", while his own tribe received the name of "the Rulers". He was successful in war against Argos and acquired a high military reputation by his conduct of the Sacred war against Crisa and Cirrha. These cities were accused of taking toll of the pilgrims who went to Delphi, and the Amphictyonic Council (see p. 41) declared war upon them. After ten years the towns were destroyed and their territory consecrated to Apollo, while the Pythian games were re-established on a more glorious footing, and the chariot-race was won by the god's champion, Cleisthenes. He treated his subjects with moderation and justice, and his rule was dependent on his own popularity. The most characteristic incident of his reign was the marriage of his daughter Agariste. She was his only child, and he spared no pains to procure for her the most suitable husband. At Olympia, after winning the chariot-race, he made proclamation to all Greece that whosoever of the Greeks deemed himself worthy of becoming the son-in-law of Cleisthenes should repair to Sicyon within sixty days. Thither came suitors from Italy, Aetolia, the Peloponnese,

Euboea, Thessaly, and Athens The tyrant then for a year entertained them lavishly at his own expense He built a special race-course and gymnasium to test their strength and skill in the games, he enquired into the family and country of each, and by constant intercourse with them made trial of their learning, their morals, and their manly qualities, in particular he proved their behaviour at table The two Athenians pleased him most, Hippocleides, son of Tisander, and Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, but it was the former that he preferred At the end of a year the day of betrothal arrived A hundred oxen were sacrificed, and the tyrant entertained at a sumptuous banquet the suitors and all the people of Sicyon After the feast, as the wine cup went round, the suitors engaged in a contest of wit Hippocleides, whose brilliance and eloquence had attracted the attention of all, tried to render himself even more conspicuous Bidding the musicians play, he began to dance, presently he called for a table and proceeded to dance upon that, finally he stood on his head and waved his legs in the air Cleisthenes, who was disgusted with the young man's want of decency, could no longer restrain himself "Son of Tisander," he cried, "you have danced away your wife" "Don't care," retorted Hippocleides, and "Hippocleides doesn't care" became a proverb Then Cleisthenes thanked the suitors for the honour they had done him in seeking the hand of his daughter, and, expressing the wish that they all could be his sons-in-law, he dismissed the rest with a talent of silver apiece, but his daughter he betrothed to Megacles Thus the Alcmaeonidae inherited his wealth and became famous throughout Greece

Such was the story told by Herodotus, exaggerated, no doubt, but painting an indelible portrait of the wealth and munificence of the tyrant About the death of Cleisthenes we know nothing, but later the Dorian element again held the upper hand, their tribes recovered their names, they joined the Lacedaemonian alliance, and Sicyon relapsed into obscurity

**Megara** The state of Megara lay at the point where the

northern part of the Isthmus becomes the western plain of Attica. The town was open to the south, facing the island of Salamis, with its port of Nisaea in front of it. On the Corinthian Gulf was another harbour, Pegae, but the Isthmus between was wide and hilly and the situation could not compete with that of Corinth. However, as far as trade north and south was concerned, the towns were equal, and in early days Megara had its share of commercial prosperity. When the Dorians first wrested the town from Attica, it was no more than an outpost of Corinth, but by the eighth century it was independent and began to take part in colonial enterprise. As we have seen, Byzantium and Heracleia owed their origin to Megara, and Megarians had their share in the colonies of Sicily.

**Theagenes** But the growth of prosperity led to the usual troubles within the city, and about 630 B.C. one of the nobles, Theagenes, championed the cause of the poor and established himself as tyrant. Under him the Megarians were successful in their struggle against the Athenians for the possession of Salamis. He supported his son-in-law Cylon in his attempt to establish himself as tyrant at Athens. He was a great builder of public works and provided a magnificent aqueduct for the city. How he ended we know not, but after his death the Athenians won Salamis, and civil strife broke out afresh. A miserable picture is painted by the Megarian poet Theognis: "Everyone cheats and robs his neighbour, they know not evil from good." But the power of Megara was doomed, eclipsed by Corinth, Aegina, and Athens, she too sank into obscurity.

**Corinth** Corinth next claims our attention. The city enjoyed great natural advantages: it was situated upon a narrow isthmus three or four miles in width and not more than 250 feet high, it commanded the cross roads, north to south by land and east to west by sea, and it possessed a magnificent "acropolis", or citadel, the Acrocorinthus, a precipitous flat-topped mountain rising to a height of nearly 2000 feet, with water and pasture upon it. Thus the town



The Acrocorinthus  
(The ruined temple marks the site of ancient Corinth)



was bound to be of the greatest importance. Realising their position, the Corinthians built a slipway with rollers across the Isthmus, that ships might be transported bodily from sea to sea, and the tyrant Periander entertained the scheme of cutting a canal<sup>1</sup>. They were also fully aware of the importance of sea power, and they were the first to build triremes, the famous galleys of Greek warfare.

Corinth for some time after the Dorian conquest, though ruled by kings, seems to have been more or less dependent upon Argos. As at Sicyon, a large part of the population was non-Dorian, and we hear of eight tribes instead of only the Dorian three. When trade and wealth developed, the power of the king declined, and about the middle of the eighth century the monarchy gave way to an oligarchy of nobles known as the Bacchiadae. For nearly a century they kept their power, but their misrule and oppression was such that numbers of citizens were driven to seek new homes across the sea. Hence arose the Corinthian colonies such as Corcyra and Syracuse (see p. 37). The misgovernment continued. In 664 B.C. was fought the first sea battle between Greeks. Corinth was worsted by her own daughter-city of Corcyra, and fell more or less under the sway of Pheidon of Argos.

Cypselus. Then the usual result occurred. In 655 B.C. a citizen named Cypselus, whose mother was of the Bacchiadae while his father was one of the subject-race, availed himself of the general discontent to put himself at the head of the unprivileged and overthrow the oligarchs. For thirty years, supported only by his popularity, he ruled with justice and with vigour. Of the oligarchs some were slain, others banished, and the rest sternly repressed and heavily taxed, the authority of Argos, upon Pheidon's death, was thrown off, the Corcyraeans were crippled by the establishment of other colonies near to them, such as Ambracia and Leucas, which were subject to the mother-city. The wealth of Cypselus was enormous, and his pious munificence was shown in the

<sup>1</sup> A canal was actually completed in 1893.

building of a treasury at Delphi and the erection at Olympia of a golden statue of Zeus

**Periander** In 625 B C Cypselus was succeeded by his son Periander, the most famous of the tyrants of Greece Of him accounts vary on the one hand he was represented as the most vigorous of despots, the patron of arts and letters, and one of the Seven Sages, on the other he was portrayed as bloodthirsty and savage, a monster of vengeful cruelty He surrounded himself with a guard of foreign mercenaries, his spies kept watch on all the citizens, his suspicious mind caused him to close the gymnasium and forbid public banquets or meetings where plots might be concocted against him He is said to have learnt from his fellow-tyrant, Thrasybulus of Miletus, the way in which a despot should rule Thrasybulus gave no answer to the Corinthian envoy, but took him to a field and with his stick cut off the ears of corn which overtopped the rest The messenger described the scene, Periander applied the lesson, any citizen who by his wealth or influence stood out from the rest was relentlessly destroyed

His private life was unhappy Scandal is always busy with the lives of the great He was said to have brutally killed his wife Then, seized with remorse, when her ghost complained that she was cold, he collected the women of Corinth in festal attire and bade his guards strip them and burn their clothes to comfort her shade He quarrelled with his son Lycophron, who had learned the secret of his mother's death and refused to speak to her murderer The boy was sent to rule in Corcyra, but when Periander grew old he asked him to return and help him govern The son stubbornly turned a deaf ear to all entreaties Periander then proposed that he himself should go to Corcyra if only his heir would return to uphold the dynasty at home But the Corcyraeans, alarmed at the idea of the tyrant's rule, hastily slew Lycophron, whereupon Periander wreaked savage vengeance upon the sons of the Corcyraean nobles

Yet Periander was a great man His long reign of forty years was the time of Corinthian importance He followed

in his father's footsteps and widened the colonial empire Corcyra was subdued and other colonies planted, till the Ionian Sea was entirely under Corinthian control Eastwards too, among the Euboean colonies of Chalcidice, he founded the town of Potidaea After his wife's death he made war on his father-in-law, and Epidaurus was added to his dominions Within the city, idling in the market-place and luxurious living were forbidden, and so was the keeping of numbers of slaves The laws must have been beneficial to the citizens, no doubt they were to the tyrant also, for an industrious population is more easily handled than an idle one

When Cleisthenes of Sicyon was reviving the Pythian games, Periander too was not to be outdone, he extended the Isthmian games in honour of Poseidon and gave them a national importance At Olympia also his offerings were splendid, and the chest of the Cypselids, made of carved cedar-wood and inlaid with gold and ivory, was the wonder of travellers eight hundred years later In his own city he spent his wealth upon public works, and the temple whose ruins still mark the site of ancient Corinth dates from his time Literature too was encouraged It was in the age of Periander that at Corinth there arose a new form of poetry, "the dithyramb", a hymn in honour of Dionysus, the vintage god, from which a century later was to spring the glory of the Athenian stage After a reign of forty years Periander died in 585 B C

His nephew, who succeeded him, was weak and soon was assassinated by his political opponents Power fell, not to birth, but into the hands of the rich, and the political importance of Corinth declined Her mercantile position, however, none could successfully assail, for it was the gift of nature, and the city remained renowned alike for its wealth and for its immorality

**Athens Peisistratus** The other tyranny on the mainland of Greece was that at Athens, of Peisistratus and his sons, of whom we shall read in a later chapter

**Polycrates of Samos** On the shores of Asia Minor



too tyrannies arose from similar causes. Reference has already been made to Thrasybulus of Miletus, the friend of Periander. Other towns as well had their tyrants. But the most famous was Polycrates of Samos. In the year 532 B.C. he made himself master of the island and ruled for ten years. At first he associated his two brothers with him in the government, but presently slew the one and banished the other. All things went prosperously with him. His court was a centre of literary life and the resort of poets, such as Anacreon. He had a pirate fleet of a hundred ships and a bodyguard of a thousand mercenaries. He plundered all men alike, for, as he said, he pleased his friends much more by restoring unexpectedly what he had taken, than by taking nothing at all. Islands and cities fell into his hands. The Milesians were defeated, and his Lesbian prisoners were enslaved and forced to work in chains. He was the first Greek to establish a naval supremacy. For a time he was the ally of Amasis, the king of Egypt. With his own countrymen his methods were simple. Those whom he suspected were enrolled for service and sent off in galleys to fight for Cambyses, the Persian king, with a message bidding the king not let them return. Suspecting his design, however, they tried to come back. Polycrates, in case of accidents, kept the wives and children of any possible sympathisers shut up in the dockyard ready to be burned alive. But the returning exiles were defeated. They applied to Sparta for help. A Lacedaemonian expedition was sent, but meeting with little success retired. It was even said that the cunning tyrant imposed on the simple Spartans by bribing them with large sums of money which he had specially coined—of gilded lead. But Polycrates met with an awful end. The Persian governor of Sardis, knowing his avarice and ambition, tempted him to the mainland with an offer of wealth which would enable him to become master of Greece. The trap was successful, and the tyrant was tortured in the most horrible way and crucified.

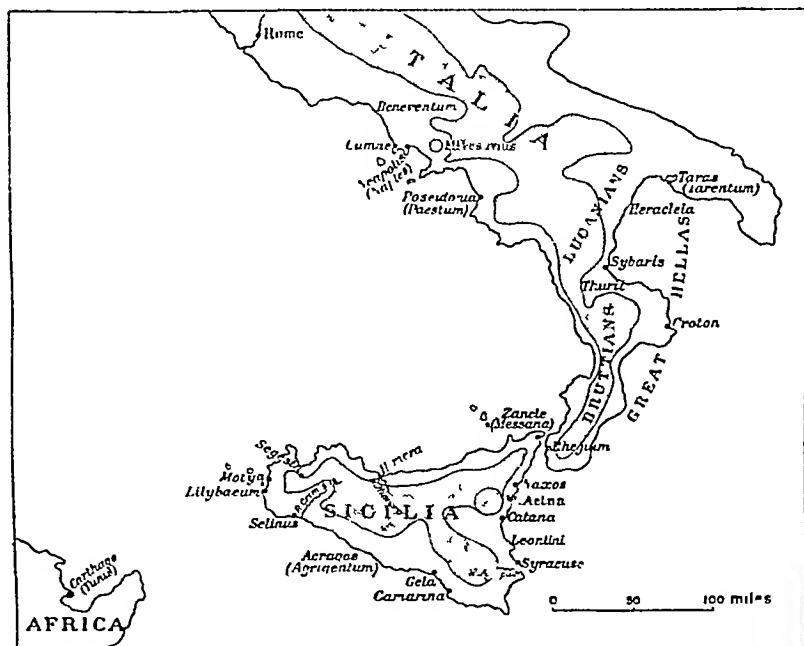
**Sicily** Phalaris of Agragas. The most splendid tyrants of all were found in the West. Some of the Italian towns were

thus ruled for short periods, but Sicily furnished the best known examples. The city of Acragas (Agrigentum) about 570 B.C., soon after its foundation, suffered from the worst of these despots. This was the infamous Phalaris, who used the magistracy as a stepping-stone to absolute power. He was said to have feasted upon human flesh, and to have thrown his prisoners into the crater of Aetna. But his especial instrument of torture was the brazen bull in which his victims were roasted alive. The idea may have been borrowed from the Carthaginian worship of Moloch. In the end he was slain as he deserved.

**Thero.** However, the western colonies were much younger than the mother-cities of Greece, and it was not till a hundred years later that they fully reached the tyrant stage of development. In the year 488 B.C. Acragas was again under a despot, this time of very different character. Thero too rose by office to the position of tyrant, but his rule was just and humane. Under him the city increased in wealth and importance, great works were constructed by slave labour, and the terrace of temples which he began still inspires wonder to-day in the mind of the modern tourist who visits Girgenti. He took part in the games of Greece and employed the poet Pindar to celebrate his victories. He extended his territory right across the island to Himera on the northern coast, and there with his ally, Gelo of Syracuse, he broke the power of Carthage and saved the Greeks of the West at the moment when Xerxes led his Persian hosts against Greece itself.

**Gelo of Syracuse.** It still remains to tell of his friends, Gelo and Hiero, the yet more famous tyrants of Syracuse. Gelo was a noble of the neighbouring Dorian town of Gela. Taking advantage of his position as commander of cavalry, he made himself tyrant of the city. Meanwhile in Syracuse the usual faction fights had resulted in the expulsion of the nobles by the people. The exiles summoned Gelo to their aid, and he at once marched upon Syracuse. The people submitted to superior force and accepted Gelo as their ruler. He now determined to make Syracuse his capital and devoted

all his efforts to increasing its population and importance. To this end he brought in half the people from his old home of Gela, and, as he became master of neighbouring towns, he destroyed them and compelled their population to immigrate. But, contrary to the practice of most tyrants, he wished for men of wealth, he had no wish for a crowd of the poor but free. So it was mainly the men of means that he brought, while the poor were sold into slavery with a reckless disregard



MAP 4 THE WESTERN GREEKS

for their feelings. To receive the new inhabitants the city was greatly enlarged and extended from the island on which it first stood to the mainland. Strong walls protected it, and dockyards and a navy were built, while temples and magnificent public buildings showed how the tyrant spent his wealth. He kept up a huge mercenary army, which, with the Syracusan force, enabled him to offer to the Greeks in their struggle against Persia no less than 200 triremes, 20,000 hoplites, 8000 cavalry and light-armed troops, and corn for the whole

Greek army At the same time a condition accompanied the offer, namely that he should be the commander-in-chief of either navy or army, which condition induced the Greeks, perhaps wisely, to decline his help (see p 117)

The battle of Himera But the great achievement of his life was the saving of the western Greeks from the power of Carthage This city was a colony which had been founded by Tyre in the ninth century, and became more important as Tyre declined beneath the advance of the Assyrian power The Carthaginians had for long had colonies at the western end of Sicily, but they did not come into collision with the Greeks until the rise of the great tyrants threatened their very existence in the island When Thero of Acragas captured Himera, its exiled tyrant begged for the assistance of the Carthaginians This was their opportunity In league, probably, with Xerxes the Persian for a combined and simultaneous attack upon the Hellenic world, they gathered together an enormous force With an army of 300,000 men in 200 warships and 3000 transports, Hamilcar, one of their kings, landed at Himera in the year 481 B C<sup>1</sup> Two camps were pitched, one by the town and the other by the ships Thero was shut up in the town and begged the assistance of his ally Gelo was ready, and with 5000 horse and 50,000 foot came to his relief The Carthaginians had lost their cavalry on the voyage and were expecting some from the Greek town of Selinus, which had joined them Gelo, hearing of this, sent his own cavalry to the Carthaginian naval camp with orders to say they were Selinuntines The trick was successful, they were admitted, and at once began to burn the ships Simultaneously Gelo led his infantry against the upper camp, and Thero made a sortie from the town Confused by this double attack and seeing their ships in flames, the Carthaginians from above rushed madly for the shore The disaster was complete Hamilcar was slain or committed

<sup>1</sup> Tradition said that the battle of Himera was fought on the same day as Salamis, 480 B C This is unlikely Gelo would not have offered help in Greece, as he did, if he had himself been in danger from Carthage

suicide, 150,000 were killed, and the slaves carried off by the conquerors were so numerous that at Acragas some citizens owned as many as 500. No wonder Thero and Gelo were able to carry out their mighty public works. The blow to Carthage was so crushing that the Greeks had nothing to fear from her for seventy years. This victory completely altered the position of Gelo. His former ruthlessness was forgotten, and he became the hero and idol of the Syracusans, he bade the citizens assemble with arms, and presented himself before them unarmed and unguarded to give an account of his acts, and, when he died three years later, the whole population followed his body at the funeral, and a magnificent monument marked his tomb.

**Hiero** He was succeeded by his brother Hiero, a man of different character. However, though he was not a man who thirsted for military glory, fate brought it about that he too should render a great service to Hellas against the barbarians. During the sixth century the power of the Etruscans had risen by land and by sea. The Tarquins were Etruscan princes who dominated Rome and the surrounding country. They had come to blows with the Greeks in Corsica and driven the Phocæan settlers from the island, and in 524 B.C. they had attacked Cumæ by land. But the victory of its bloodthirsty tyrant Aristodemus had saved the city from the enemy for the time, and some twenty years later, in the days of Lars Porsena who attempted to restore the Tarquins to Rome, he inflicted upon them another defeat. In 474 B.C. they resumed their attacks, this time by sea. The Cumæans appealed to Syracuse. Hiero rose to the occasion and, as the most powerful ruler of western Hellas, championed the Hellenic cause. The Etruscans with their Carthaginian allies were defeated by the combined Cumæan and Syracusan fleets, and ceased to be a danger by sea. An Etruscan helmet which Hiero dedicated at Olympia amongst other trophies of this victory is now in the British Museum.

But while vigorously supporting the leading position of Syracuse, repelling, for instance, an assault from Acragas

and threatening the tyrant Anaxilaus of Rhegium who was about to attack his neighbours, Hiero was really a man of peace. Peaceful fame was what he desired. His brother had been the founder of Syracusan greatness, he too must found a town. Therefore he removed the inhabitants of Catana to another place, and on the site built a new town of Aetna, calling himself an Aetnaean rather than a Syracusan. In Greece too he must create an impression, so he spent vast sums in chariot and horse-racing and magnificent display at the Olympic and other games. Nor was the honour of victory alone enough. Posterity must remember his name. And so to his court were invited all the foremost literary men of his day, among them Aeschylus, the tragic dramatist of Athens, and Pindar the Theban, the prince of lyric poets, that they might compose plays and odes in honour of his achievements and render his fame imperishable. Yet his private life was unhappy. He suffered long from an incurable disease and was ever haunted by suspicions of the loyalty of his subjects. Spies therefore were instituted, male and female, to watch the lives of the citizens, and the citizens responded by regarding the tyrant with fear and dislike. Thus, the miserable centre of a magnificent court, he died in 467 B.C. His brother who succeeded him was hated and expelled, and then arose a period of violent civil strife between the nobles and the masses, the strangers who had been introduced and the exiles who now returned. Finally democracy triumphed at Syracuse and elsewhere, and the Sicilian cities settled down to a period of peaceful prosperity.

## SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 What was the character of the average Greek tyrant?
- 4 Whom do you consider to have been the best of the tyrants?
- 5 Were they any benefit to their cities?
- 6 Why is it difficult to write of Greek history as a whole?

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF ATHENS

The importance of Athens In the last chapter we followed the history of tyrants even later than 500 B.C. We must now turn to the early history of Athens, and bear in mind that we are going back many centuries Of all the cities of Greece none has played a larger part than Athens, both in the affairs of Hellas and in Hellenic influence upon the world Commercially Corinth was the greater town, in war the Spartan reputation stood higher, but intellectually none could compete with Athens, and long after Greek independence had passed away she remained the centre of Greek life and learning Thus it was that the great majority of Greek writers were Athenians themselves or spent much of their life there as at a university, and they have handed down to us more information about Athens than about any other state Yet we must bear in mind that in early Greek history Athens was insignificant She played no part in the Heroic Age, nor was she at first of importance as a commercial or colonising state It was not till the time of Peisistratus, about 550 B.C., that she rose to be anything more than second-rate, and it was the Persian wars that brought her to the foremost place in Greece

Attica The promontory of Attica is shut off from the rest of Greece by the ranges of Mt. Cithaeron and Mt. Parnes, which form a wall on its northern side By sea it is readily accessible on every other side But the land route along the Isthmus north and south leaves all except the extreme western corner untouched, while the sea routes east and west converge upon the Isthmus and have no need of Attica The land too is for the most part somewhat barren Thus it never offered

a tempting prize to the invader, he was usually content to pass it by. For this reason its inhabitants claimed that they were "autochthonous", the "sons of the soil". Yet, though thus free from hostile invasion, it was always an open asylum to immigrants who came as refugees. It was as characteristic of the Athenians to receive strangers as it was of the Spartans to discourage visits of any kind. Thus a large part of the population certainly came from other places and was not aboriginal.

Theseus, c. 1300 B.C.? The Athenians had their share of legendary heroes. Of these the greatest and most nearly real was Theseus. Legend tells how he came from Troezen, where once the Ionians lived, how he introduced the division into four tribes, a peculiar feature of Ionian Greeks, how he delivered Athens from its annual tribute of seven youths and seven maidens due to the Minotaur, and how he was king of Attica and joined together the scattered communities of the land under the leadership of Athens. A well-known legend too, one that was represented in the sculptures of the Parthenon, told of the strife between Poseidon, the Ionian god, and Athene for the possession of the land. When we consider these legends together, it seems plausible to suppose that Theseus, if not altogether real, at least represents an historical fact, the first coming of the Ionians, perhaps hard pressed by the Achaeans of Mycenae, from the shores of Argolis and their fusion with some earlier inhabitants. Five miles inland from the spot which provides a number of sheltered harbours and must have been the Ionian landing-place, by a perennial stream on the south side of the most fertile plain of Attica, there rises up a curious flat-topped rock. This from the earliest times was the "Acropolis", or citadel, of the owner of that plain and was sacred to Athene. Naturally, then, the leader of the Ionians preferred to join with the community that inhabited it, and the town of Athens, thus strengthened, became the centre of Ionian Attica and threw off the dominion of Crete, since Cnossus had fallen.

Decline of monarchy. We have no record of the government of those days beyond the names of kings. But



doubtless the monarchy was of the usual type, limited by a council of nobles and an assembly of all free men. Rather before the year 1100 B.C. a new line of kings came to the throne. They were refugees from Pylos (Navarino) in Messenia, and their accession was said to be owing to their valour in repelling the Boeotian invasion which at that time threatened Attica. Shortly afterwards came the Dorian attack from the Peloponnese. Megara was torn from Attica, but the bravery and self-sacrifice of Codrus, the king, repelled these invaders too. The story said that in gratitude for his services to his country the Athenians would allow no other to bear the title of king. Instead, a new name of "archon" was borne by his descendants, who first held office for life, and then for ten years only. It is more likely that, as a result of those troublous times when Attica was filled with refugees and the Ionian migration to Asia took place, the kingly authority was weakened, as it was elsewhere, and the power of the nobles gradually took its place. (This much we know, that owing to the weakness of some hereditary king-archon, a "polemarch", or commander-in-chief, was added to undertake military duties, and then a third archon for civil matters, who eventually became the most important of the three and gave his name to the year. To the king-archon were left religious duties and little else. Many years after their institution these archonships became annual offices, and even the king-archonship was opened to the nobility. Finally, in the year 683 B.C. ? six junior archons with judicial duties were added, making the full board of nine which lasted throughout Athenian history. These passed at the end of their year of office into the council of the Areopagus.)

**Misgovernment of the nobles** Thus by that time the government had fallen into the hands of the nobility, "Eupatridae", or "men of good birth", as they called themselves. They had the command of the forces, the mysteries of religion were in their hands, the law was administered and interpreted solely by them. The kings and even the decennial archons had at least been some protection to the poor, now they were

gone Not even a code of law existed, the law was what the nobles said it should be, the land, moreover, was in their hands The state was convulsed by three factions—the Plain, the Shore, and the Hills The men of the Plain were the rich Eupatrid landowners Attica for the most part has such a thin soil and so little water that the small owner was always near the verge of starvation Only a few parts are really fertile, and those, we may be sure, were in the hands of the nobles Thus any disaster of war, drought, or illness, would bring the poor man to ruin, and he could apply only to his rich neighbour for a loan The nobles framed the laws of debt in their own interest If the man borrowed, his land was the security, but interest was high, and he never could make enough to pay it, so the land passed to his creditor, while he was reduced to the position of a serf upon it, paying one-sixth of the produce to the lord In Attica the remaining five-sixths was not enough upon which to live When he got behindhand with his rent he was in the position of the ordinary landless debtor who could not pay his debts, and he himself and his family could be sold into slavery Thus, as Aristotle says, “the poor were the slaves of the rich, and the land was in the hands of a few” The men of the Shore were the traders and merchants, possessed, it may be, of some wealth, but not owners of land, and therefore without a share in the government The men of the Hills were the poor shepherds and goatherds of the mountain side, who had little to lose and everything to gain by disturbance

Cylon's conspiracy, 632 B.C.? Presently a noble named Cylon, who was distinguished as an Olympic victor, took advantage of the general discontent to make an attempt to establish himself as tyrant He had married the daughter of Theagenes, tyrant of Megara, and, with help from his father-in-law and from his friends, he seized the Acropolis The Athenians, hearing of the occurrence, came in hastily from the fields, and, contrary to his expectation, far from welcoming him as a deliverer from the nobles, joined the authorities in besieging him Soon the mass of the people went to their homes

and their work, leaving the archons to settle the matter. Provisions ran short, and the conspirators took refuge at the altar of Athene. The archons did not wish the holy place to be polluted by the dying men, and so offered them their lives. Cylon and his brother escaped, but the rest surrendered and left their sanctuary. However, as they passed down from the Acropolis, they were set upon and slain. For this act of treachery the family of the archon Megacles, the Alcmaeonidae, were considered accursed, and some years later their opponents raised the cry that the woes of the city were due to the presence of the accursed family. For this reason they were expelled from the city, and even the tombs of their family were opened and the bones cast out of the land. We shall see that more than once in the subsequent history of Athens the same cry was raised.

**Draco, 621 B.C.** Yet matters went from bad to worse, and at last the nobles gave way to the demands for a definite code of law. In the year 621 B.C. the work was entrusted to Draco. A noble himself, he seems to have fixed the heaviest possible penalties for every offence. The laws of Draco, it was said, were written not in ink but in blood. Death was a frequent punishment. But even a code of the utmost severity was better than none at all, at least men now knew what the laws were, and we may remember that in our own country a hundred years ago any theft of more than five shillings in value was punishable with death. However, in one respect at least the laws were made more merciful. If a homicide pleaded that his act was unintentional or justifiable, he was protected from the avenger of blood, and a body of men called "ephetæ", probably a committee of the Areopagus, tried the case and arranged the penalty<sup>1</sup>.

**Discontent.** But since Draco's code of law did nothing to give political power to the unprivileged and little to help the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Constitution of Athens*, attributed to Aristotle, Draco is said to have drawn up a new constitution also, which anticipated the work of Solon. This is probably incorrect.

lot of the poor, the troubles still continued To add to the general discontent, Athens at this time lost the island of Salamis to the Megarians under their tyrant Theagenes So acute did the distress become, and so critical was the state of political affairs, that, in the year 594 B C, it was resolved to suspend the government and entrust the state temporarily to one man as archon with full powers to arrange matters both social and political

Solon, 594 B C The man who was thus trusted was Solon A noble by birth, but one of the mercantile, unprivileged class by profession, he had already won golden opinions among the Athenians by his political poems, in which he continually exhorted moderation, honesty, and justice, and blamed the haughty avarice and oppression of the rich He had also urged the Athenians to fresh efforts to recover Salamis, and after a long struggle, in which he led his countrymen and put his words into deeds, the Megarians had been defeated and Salamis was Athenian once more He had gained fame also on the side of the Amphictyonic Council in the Sacred war

The "Seisachtheia" Solon's first efforts were directed towards removing the awful laws of debt By a series of sweeping measures known as the "Seisachtheia", or "shaking off of burdens", he restored to liberty all the citizens in Attica who had been sold into slavery, and recovered many even from other lands, all debts, whether owed to private individuals or due to the state, were cancelled, for the future the personal liberty of none might be pledged as a security for a loan As Solon expected, the arrangement satisfied nobody for the moment the rich had lost, the poor had not gained all they wanted The general dissatisfaction was the proof of the moderation and justice of his compromise Soon this was realised and his fairness was given due recognition

The new constitution He then proceeded to his political arrangements For this purpose wealth was to supersede birth, all men had a chance of rising to wealth and thus of rising to political power. The whole people was rated

in four classes<sup>1</sup>, according to income derived from landed property. It is possible that these classes, for purposes of taxation, had existed even before. By insisting that land alone should count, Solon ensured that those who sought political rights should have an interest in the welfare of the country. The archonship was open only to the first class, inferior offices and a place in the new council to the first three. The fourth class had only a share in the assembly and the law courts. But this share was soon to be of the utmost importance. The burdens were graduated like the privileges. The first class had to bear the expense of office and render certain special services, such as the maintenance of ships of war, the second had to serve as horsemen, the third as hoplites (i.e. heavy-armed infantry), the fourth were exempt from direct taxation and expensive military service, but supplied light-armed troops and rowers for the fleet.

The archons were chosen in a curious way. Each of the four Ionic tribes chose ten men, forty in all, and so far the ordinary methods of election prevailed, but the final selection was made by lot. Thus the voters could make sure that certain enemies should not hold office, but they had no means of ensuring that the position would be won by any particular friend.

For preparing and discussing business of state Solon instituted a new "Boule", or council, of 400 men, 100 from each of the tribes. The members were perhaps chosen in the same way as the archons.

) Meanwhile the old council of the Areopagus, composed of ex-archons, and therefore dependent on both popular choice and the fortune of the lot, was relieved of formal business and entrusted with a general supervision of the lives and morals of Athenian citizens both in public and in private. Cases of murder too still came before it.

) Finally came the "Ecclesia", or assembly, of all free citizens over twenty years of age. No doubt an assembly of some kind had always existed, but its powers hitherto had been very small. Now it obtained the power of deciding upon

<sup>1</sup> πενταλοσιομέδιμνοι, ἱππεῖς, ζευγῖται, θῆτες

such matters as the council wished to put before it, and had effective control over the officials of the state. In the first place it was the electing body which created those officials, in the second place it could constitute itself into a "Heliaea", or law court, and bring to account any of those officials when he laid down his office.

Such was Solon's constitution. Wealth replaced birth as the qualification for privilege, and wealth was theoretically open to any man, secondly, privilege had its responsibilities and was the gift of the people, and to the people must account be made if the gift was abused.

Besides relieving debt and providing a new constitution which gave power to wealth and yet had the germ of democracy, Solon cancelled the code of Draco, except as far as it related to homicide, and enacted a number of fresh laws Three only call for our attention If in time of civil strife a man remained neutral, he was to lose the rights of a citizen Solon wished to impress a lesson that if a man shares in the privileges of citizenship he must also take his share of the duties and burdens, the man who does not care is not worthy of his citizenship. The other two laws had far-reaching effects The one altered the standard of the coinage from the Aeginetan to the Euboean Commercially Athens hitherto had been dependent upon Aegina, for the future she was to be the rival of Aegina and to come into commercial alliance with the rest of the Ionian Greeks. This was to be one of the causes of her greatness. The second law provided that a foreigner might become a citizen of Athens if he gave up his citizenship in his old home Thus Athens opened her gates to the world at large, and, instead of adopting a policy of narrow-mindedness, drew to herself fresh ideas and fresh energy from every quarter The laws of Solon, when complete, were inscribed on revolving tablets and placed upon the Acropolis.

Solon's travels. It is said that Solon exacted from the Athenians an oath that they would observe his ordinances for ten years, and then went abroad to leave the results to develop by themselves. His journeys took him to Cyprus

and Egypt, and to the court of Croesus, king of Lydia. Unfortunately we cannot believe that the meeting with Croesus ever took place, but the story is worth telling because it illustrates one of the most notable of Greek beliefs, the idea that excess is sure sooner or later to pay the penalty. Solon was most hospitably entertained by the king and shown all the royal wealth and magnificence. But, far from being impressed by what he saw, in reply to the question whom he thought the happiest of men, he named an obscure Athenian who lived a peaceful life, brought up his children happily, saw his grandchildren born, and then fell fighting for his country. Expecting at least the second place in happiness, Croesus asked who came next. Solon mentioned two brothers of Argos who possessed moderate means and were victors in the games. One day their aged mother wished to attend the festival of Hera, but the oxen were ploughing in the fields. The young men therefore, in the sight of all men, themselves drew their mother's chariot five miles to the shrine, and, when she asked for the blessing of the goddess for their filial piety, they lay down in the temple precincts and died in their sleep. Croesus was annoyed, and asked the Athenian why he had this poor opinion of him. Solon then explained that the gods were ever jealous of success, wealth could not make happiness, man was the sport of fortune, and, until he died happily, none could say his life had been a happy one. The fate of Croesus proved the wisdom of the Athenian's words. Tradition told too of interviews with the wisest men of the day, and a halo of legend grew around Solon's name. Many a story was related of his learning and wise utterances, and posterity enrolled him among the Seven Sages of Greece.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Was Solon a great man?
4. In what way were his reforms an improvement?
5. Compare political development at Athens with that elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RISE OF ATHENS

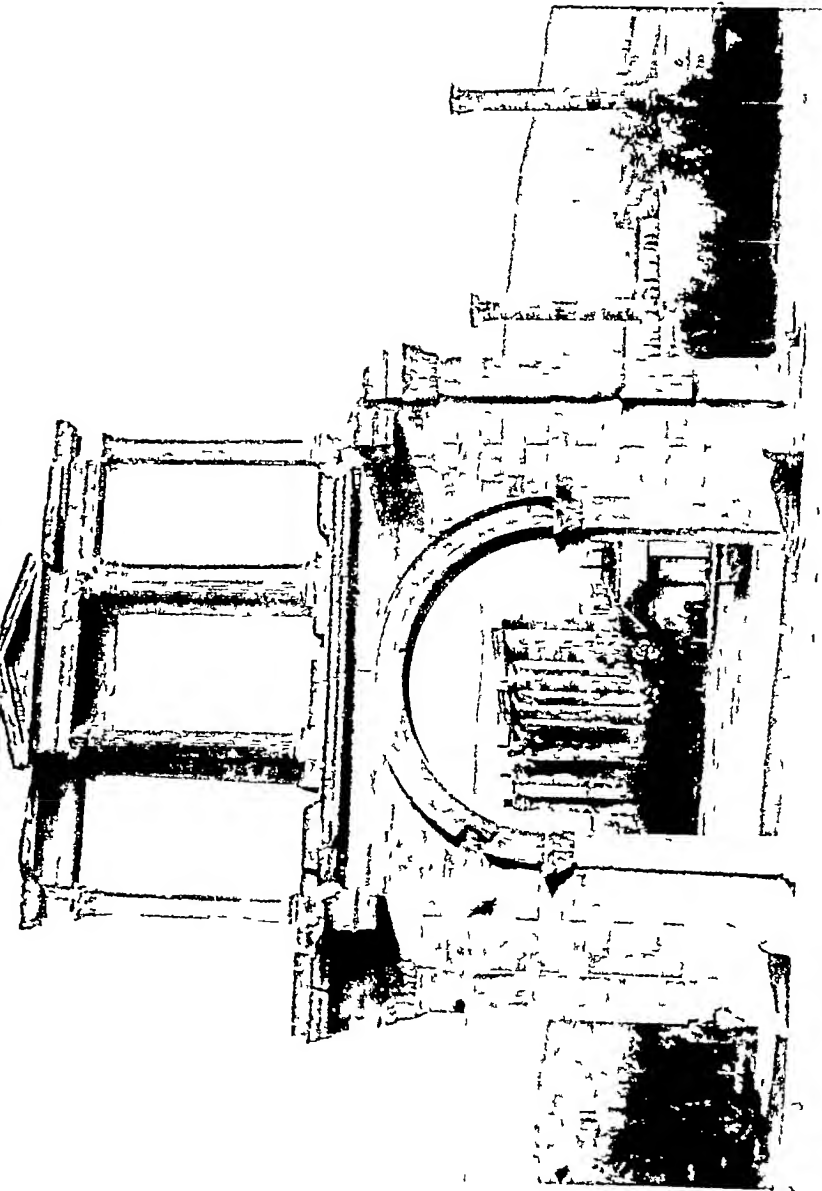
Peisistratus, 560—527 B C When at length Solon returned to Athens, he found that the city was still in a state of party strife His laws were observed, but they had not given satisfaction to any of the three factions The sharper lesson of tyranny was necessary to teach men to unite, and Athens too had to pass through that stage of political development The party of the Plain, the Eupatridae, was now under the leadership of Lycurgus The mercantile class of the Shore was headed by Megacles of the accursed Alcmaeonid family, who since their expulsion after Cylon's conspiracy were bitterly opposed to the rest of the nobles This man's wealth was great and his position powerful through his marriage with Agariste, the daughter of Cleisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon (see pp 58—9). The poor men of the Hills found a champion in Peisistratus, a young noble of the old royal family, who had distinguished himself recently in war against Megara The aged Solon recognised that the people's hero, his own kinsman, was the most dangerous of the three, and, resorting again to political verse, he warned his countrymen against following the "winning words of the fox" Solon was one of the few men in Greece who could have proved themselves worthy of the trust which had been reposed in him Honesty and a good name were what he desired, the tyranny which he might have taken he refused But his words were all in vain Peisistratus appeared wounded in the market-place, thereupon the citizens in assembly granted him a bodyguard of fifty men armed with clubs, a few days later they found him openly established in



the Acropolis as the tyrant of Athens, 560 B.C. Lycurgus and Megacles left the city, Solon remained, treated with respect by the tyrant, but irreconcilable, and died shortly afterwards.

**First tyranny of Peisistratus** The rule of Peisistratus was moderate and mild, "more like that of a statesman than that of a tyrant." The government was carried on as before, though no doubt only friends or members of his family held the archonship and other important posts, no man was slain and few were banished, taxation was not oppressive, trade and agriculture were encouraged. But there was no attempt to disguise the tyranny, and a bodyguard of mercenaries continued to hold the Acropolis. The acts of Peisistratus were typical of the position which he held. By him great works for the gods were undertaken. On the Acropolis stood a temple of Athene, this was now rebuilt, not in ordinary stone, but in marble, and adorned with sculpture, and, that Athens might take her proper place in the Hellenic world, the greater Pan-Athenaic festival was celebrated every four years with great splendour. Below the Acropolis was built a new shrine in honour of Dionysus, and on his holy day was held a contest in song and dance, which less than a century later developed into the famous contests of Attic tragedy. Outside the walls was begun a huge temple to Zeus. This, however, was not completed by the tyrant or his sons, and was left for the Roman Emperor Hadrian to finish nearly 700 years afterwards. Literature, too, was patronised, and the most famous poets of the day came to Athens in his reign and that of his sons. But the great literary work which tradition attributed to him was the final revision and publication of the poems of Homer in the form in which we now have them.

Abroad Athens was to play a leading part as head of the Ionian race. For this reason Peisistratus undertook the purification of Delos and renewed the celebrations of the Pan-Ionian festival in honour of Apollo. With other states peaceful relations were preserved as far as possible, and the



*The Illustration Co.*

Temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens, the Olympieum

(The ruins are those of the temple as finished by the Emperor Hadrian c. 130 A.D. In front is the Arch of Hadrian, N.B. The arch was never used in Greek architecture. An example of the Corinthian style.)



friendship of Sparta, the foe of tyranny, was especially cultivated. At this time Athens turned her attention to the Hellespont also. At Sigeum on the Asiatic shore a hitherto unsuccessful colony was now fortified afresh, while the peninsula on the European side, the Thracian Chersonese, as it was called, at the request of its Thracian inhabitants received Miltiades, a noble and an opponent of Peisistratus, as its ruler.

**Second and third tyrannies.** Yet the career of Peisistratus was strangely chequered by vicissitudes. Twice he was expelled from Athens, and twice he regained his power. The first time Megacles and Lycurgus combined to turn him out, and he retired to his own estates near Marathon in the north-east of Attica. But the two leaders quarrelled, and Megacles brought Peisistratus back again. The story runs how, accompanied by a tall woman in armour, Peisistratus drove to Athens in a chariot, while heralds entered the city and proclaimed that Athene herself was bringing back her favourite to her own Acropolis. The second time too it was Megacles who turned him out. For ten years he was in exile, and spent part of the time developing gold mines in Macedonia. With this wealth to help him, he came to Eretria in Euboea to watch events. Then, seizing an opportunity, he landed at Marathon, routed without bloodshed the forces sent against him, and, with the approval of the majority of both poor and rich, once more established himself in Athens. In 527 B.C. he died peacefully, after having given to his country a time of quiet prosperity and deliverance from the curse of contending factions.

**Hippias, 527—510 B.C.** He was succeeded by his son Hippias, who conducted the government on the same lines as his father for fourteen years. Then a younger brother, Hipparchus, insulted the sister of a young man named Harmodius, by whom he had been foiled in a love-affair. Harmodius and his friend Aristogeiton plotted revenge. With a few comrades they determined to murder the brothers together during the procession at the Pan-Athenaic festival. Fearing,

however, that they were betrayed, they struck down Hipparchus without waiting for Hippias. Harmodius was cut down at once by the guards, Aristogeiton was put to death after horrible tortures to induce him to inform against his fellow-conspirators. But no popular rising had taken place as they had calculated. Hippias now became a changed man, suspicious and sullen, he gathered a large force of troops and proceeded to severe measures against those whom he suspected. His reward was the whole-hearted hatred of the Athenians, who henceforth worshipped Harmodius and Aristogeiton as the champions of liberty.

**Expulsion of Hippias** Meanwhile the Alcmaeonidae, under Cleisthenes, son of Megacles, had been in exile. The family had attained a high reputation for wealth and piety by their rebuilding of Apollo's temple at Delphi. When the old temple had been burnt they contracted to build the new one of limestone, but at their own expense they provided a marble front of the best stone. Thus they won the favour of the priesthood. In consequence of this the Spartans, when applying to the oracle upon any point, invariably received the command to "free Athens first." At last, in spite of their friendship for the family of Peisistratus, they set out to obey the god's bidding. The first attempt was a failure, but in the second Cleomenes (see p 45), the Spartan king, captured the children of Hippias, and, in order to secure their freedom, the tyrant evacuated Athens and sailed away to Sigeum near Troy, 510 B.C., while the Alcmaeonidae returned to the city.

**New parties** With the fall of the tyranny at Athens there disappeared also the rivalry between the three famous factions of the Plain, the Shore, and the Hills. But it was quite impossible for any Greek state, except Sparta where iron discipline prevailed, to be free from party strife. For the future the struggle in Athens was to be fought out between the oligarchs, men of birth and men of wealth, and the democrats, the mass of citizens, led sometimes by the wealthy or high-born, at other times by those who had risen from the mob. Yet the subjection of all alike under the rule of

Peisistratus and his sons had had a levelling effect upon the community, and the cause of oligarchy was doomed to be a losing one

**Cleisthenes** Owing to the part they had played in procuring the expulsion of Hippias, the Alcmaeonidae stood in high favour, and Cleisthenes, the head of the family, was the most popular man in the city. Realising where the strength of Peisistratus had lain, he did not content himself as of old with the support of the mercantile classes, but, as Herodotus says, "he made the people his comrade" and thus identified himself with the growing spirit of democracy. His opponent was a noble named Isagoras, a man of narrow aristocratic and selfish views. This man, finding himself in a hopeless minority, looked for outside help and made application once more to Sparta. King Cleomenes, who by this time, no doubt, had realised why the Delphian god had always bidden the Spartans set Athens free, was nothing loth to have his revenge on those Alcmaeonidae who had thus made him ridiculous. With a small force of his own personal adherents he marched upon Athens. Cleisthenes withdrew, seven hundred families were banished, and an oligarchy of Isagoras' friends was set up. But the Athenian people were alarmed, and, realising the small numbers of the Spartan force, they besieged them and Isagoras in the Acropolis. Starvation soon brought its defenders to terms. The Lacedaemonians were allowed to depart unharmed, and Isagoras succeeded in escaping with them, but his followers were seized and put to death. Cleisthenes and the exiles were brought back, and the old government was restored.

**Danger of Athens** Cleomenes was furious with rage and set to work to wreak vengeance on the Athenians. A large Lacedaemonian force was called out with both kings at its head, and contingents were summoned from all the Peloponnesian states in the Spartan confederacy. Nor was this the only danger that threatened Athens. Boeotia up to this time had played no part in the political history of Greece. When the Boeotian invaders had come into the land just

before 1100 B C they had settled down mainly at Thebes. We know little about their development, but apparently they had gone through the usual political changes. Gradually Thebes had formed a Boeotian confederacy of which she was the leading city. Oichomenus, the chief centre of the earlier inhabitants, had been subdued and almost all the other towns brought into the league. But the little town of Plataea on the borders of Attica had ever been jealous of Thebes and, when Hippias was tyrant, had formed an alliance with Athens. Thus Athens and Thebes became embroiled. Chalcis too, the great commercial town of Euboea, was now jealous of the growing power of Athens, and, at the instigation of Cleomenes, she combined with Thebes to make an attack on the north while the Peloponnesians invaded from the west. Thus threatened, the Athenians, at the suggestion of the Alcmaeonidae, turned for help to Persia, whose king, Darius, already ruled over the Greek towns of Asia Minor. But the Persians demanded submission to Persia as the price of help. These terms the Athenians indignantly rejected, and another and far more formidable power was added to their list of enemies. Left to their own resources the Athenians laid aside their private quarrels, and the whole people, animated by a common impulse of patriotism, strained every nerve to preserve that "autonomy", or independence, which was so dear to the heart of a Greek.

**Peloponnesian invasion** The Peloponnesian force assembled at the Isthmus and marched into Attica as far as Eleusis, where the Athenians awaited it. But an unexpected salvation for Athens was at hand. Cleomenes, who hitherto had kept his plans secret even from his allies, now openly announced his intention of installing his friend Isagoras as tyrant of Attica. But to his astonishment the Corinthians flatly refused to countenance any such thing. They still remembered the days of Periander, and they saw in Athens a useful counterpoise to Aegina, which so much hampered their own trade. The majority of states followed Corinth, and Demaratus, the other Spartan king, supported them with his authority. It was

a principle of Spartan policy to expel, not to set up, tyrants, Sparta herself had no cause for quarrel with Athens, and Cleomenes had now clearly exposed his hand and showed that his one object was personal revenge upon the Athenians for the humiliation he had just received. The result was that the Peloponnesian army broke up and went home.

**War against Thebes and Chalcis** Thus relieved from their greatest danger, the Athenians turned to repel the raids of the Boeotians and Chalcidians. Then followed an astonishing achievement. One morning they utterly routed the Theban force, while in the afternoon they crossed the Euripus, the narrow strait which separates Euboea from the mainland, and defeated the men of Chalcis too. The town fell to the Athenians, the ruling oligarchs were expelled, and their land was taken and distributed in "cleruchies", or allotments, amongst the poorer Athenian citizens. Not only did Chalcis cease to be a commercial rival, but the settlers acted as an Athenian garrison and held the government in their hands. The war against the Boeotian League lingered on, but little was done on either side, in fact it was rather a state of hostility than a war.

**War against Aegina** At the same time the Athenians found themselves exposed to the attacks of another foe. The Thebans, having been worsted, made an alliance with Aegina, and the Aeginetans, who were already regarding with suspicion the growing power of a rival, without any declaration of war proceeded to raid Phalerum, the harbour of Athens, and plunder Athenian shipping. In order to repel their attacks the Athenians were forced to hire ships from the Corinthians, who were only too ready to help in any matter that would injure the Aeginetans. Thus began a desultory warfare that lasted fifty years and ended only with the complete submission of Aegina. But the war had the most important results for Athens even in the earlier years. It led firstly to the building of a fleet, and secondly to the adoption of the splendid harbour of the Peiraeus and to its fortification against the enemy's attacks. Thus Athens was set upon a career of



naval greatness and, when the Persian invasion came, was able to save Greece from the barbarian,

**Constitution of Cleisthenes, 508 B.C. ?** Meanwhile the outburst of patriotism and democratic feeling in Attica had caused the people to entrust Cleisthenes with the task of reforming the constitution, and he had started with the work before the futile invasion of Cleomenes took place. There could be no doubt that Solon's constitutional arrangements had been a failure. Events had proved that danger lay in the broad local divisions of Plain, Shore, and Hills, and in the family divisions of tribes and clans, both of which were the basis of social and political divisions too. This system Cleisthenes resolved to do away with once for all. For the future the old family organisation was to be reserved for religious purposes only. For political purposes an entirely new scheme was laid down. The whole district of Attica was divided into "demes", or townships, each with its own council and officers and demesmen. This deme was the unit of the system, and a man was to be officially known and distinguished by his own name and that of his deme as well as by that of his father. Enrolment in the register of a deme became the necessary qualification of citizenship. These demes were then grouped in ten new tribes, each called after some Attic hero but not pretending to descent from him. Had Cleisthenes taken all the demes of one tribe from the Plain and of another from the Shore, the old trouble would have reappeared. What he did was to place in each tribe demes from all three districts. Thus the landowner was the fellow-tribesman and the political equal of the merchant and the shepherd, while the demes of Athens and the suburbs were divided among all the ten tribes. At the same time all free inhabitants of Attica, whether resident foreigners or those who had once been slaves, were given the citizenship and put on a level with those who boasted the proudest birth. Thus the state which was to bid for empire was filled with thousands of grateful citizens.

The Areopagus remained as it was, a venerable council

of ex-archons, charged with the same duties as before. But Solon's system of combined lot and election had been dropped by Peisistratus, and the membership was now simply the result of popular vote.

The old "Boule", or council, consisting of a hundred from each of the four old tribes, was swept away. In its place was created a new council of five hundred members, fifty from each of the ten new tribes, holding office for the year. Any Athenian citizen over thirty years of age was eligible. The selection was made by lot from amongst those who came forward, but every man had to be approved as suitable by the outgoing council. This council discussed matters and sent its recommendations to the people for their vote. Together with the various magistrates it executed the decrees of the people and carried out the administrative work which in our country belongs to ministers and their government departments. It had considerable judicial powers also, but these in course of time were weakened by transference to the law courts. The year was divided into ten periods called "Prytanies", and for each period the fifty of one tribe acted as a committee of the council and were boarded and lodged in the "Prytaneium" at the public expense. The fifty were further divided into five bodies of ten called "Proedri", each ten presiding for a week, both in the council and in the assembly, and choosing by lot from their number each day an "Epistates", or chairman, who for his day was supreme and held the keys of the Acropolis and the treasury.

The "Ecclesia", or assembly, was composed as before of all the citizens, but its powers were vastly increased. It met at least once each prytany and could be convened at any time. It alone could make laws, and it was competent to deal with business of any kind. Strictly the assembly could not make a law unless the proposal had been first considered by the council, but it could make such alterations that in practice it did as it liked, and it could call upon the council to make a formal proposal. The usual place of assembly eventually was an open space called the "Pnyx". When a

measure had been introduced by the proposer or the chairman, any citizen might rise and speak from the "bema", or platform. Thus any man gifted with eloquence had an extraordinary power of swaying the Athenian people and guiding the policy of the state.

Solon had also made the assembly into a "Heliæa", or law court, to which all officials were responsible at the end of their term of office and to which appeals could be made from the decisions of the magistrates. These powers were now further developed either by Cleisthenes or soon after his day. Eventually, from those citizens over thirty years of age who volunteered for service as jurors, a body of about six thousand was selected by lot and divided into ten courts called "dicasteries". Before these courts, often consisting of hundreds of jurors, most cases, except those of murder, were tried. At the last moment, in order to prevent bribery, lots were cast to see before which court the case should come, and which of the six junior archons should act as president. But we must bear in mind that the archon was no more than a chairman, and the jurors in the Athenian courts were judges too and decided upon the penalty.

Amongst other results of the new arrangement of ten tribes was the subsequent creation of boards of ten officials, some of them elected, most of them chosen by lot. The first of these boards was that of ten "strategi", or generals, who were to command the military forces of the tribes. In course of time the generals became the most powerful officers of the state. But over all officials the assembly had complete control. Whether they were elected by the people or chosen by lot from among those who stood as candidates, all, before they entered office, had to pass an examination in the courts as to their birth and qualifications, all were liable to suspension by the assembly, which once a month confirmed the appointments, and all at the end of their term had to render their accounts to the people. When we remember that most officials had nine colleagues, and held office only for a year, we see that at Athens all real

power theoretically lay with the sovereign assembly of the citizens

Finally Cleisthenes introduced the practice of "Ostracism". Once a year the assembly was asked if it thought that the state would benefit by the temporary exile of some one man. If ostracism was demanded, a day was fixed for the voting. No names were proposed, but, if in an assembly of six thousand a majority of votes written upon potsherds, "ostraca", were found to show any one name, that man had to retire into banishment for ten years. His property and citizenship were not touched, nor was ostracism any reflection upon his character. The object was to procure the temporary removal of any one whose influence seemed a danger to the state, and to provide a way of escape from a deadlock arising out of the opposition of two equally balanced parties. In practice, however, it was not a success. Some of the most prominent Athenians were banished when the city was in need of their services, if rivalry between two leaders was acute, though peace might be preserved by ostracism, yet the salutary check of a rival's presence was often removed at the moment when it was most required, and on one occasion at least, when an attempt was made in this way to get rid of one of two antagonists, the process utterly failed, for a third person was banished instead. After this incident in 418 B.C. (see p. 197) ostracism fell into disuse.

Thus all the power was in the hands of the people. The government was democracy. It was a great political experiment. Whether it would be a success, whether the people would wield the power that was in their hands, whether they were capable and sufficiently educated to use their opportunities, whether they would use them well, or whether they would let the power rest with officials or demagogues,—these were questions which time and events alone could decide.

Such was the constitution as laid down by Cleisthenes, and such, in the main, it continued to be throughout Athenian history. In many ways it was only a development of Solon's institutions. But Cleisthenes saw where Solon's system failed,

and his alterations removed the weakness by basing everything upon the new tribes and demes. The old parties disappeared and the Athenian people were brought together on a common level. Tendencies to disunion did indeed re-appear, oligarch striving with democrat, but fortunately wars with Aegina and Thebes held them together till there came an outside foe, and the blows of the Persian hammer welded the component parts into one united mass.

**Persia and Athens** It now remains to show the steps by which the Persian danger advanced. When Cleomenes returned home from his failure in Attica, he made fresh attempts to win the consent of Sparta's allies to another expedition. But they, the Corinthians in particular, would not listen to any such suggestion. Hippias, for whom Cleomenes had sent, offering to restore him to Athens, now went back to Sigeium and set to work to win Persian help. He applied to Artaphernes, the Persian "satrap", or governor, at Sardis, who was already offended with the Athenians for their refusal of Persian assistance. The Athenians tried to conciliate the satrap, but were told their only hope was to receive back Hippias and send "earth and water", the signs of submission, to the "Great King". This the Athenians, jealously guarding their new-found freedom, refused to do, and preferred to take the consequences. Therefore, when in 499 B.C. the Ionians broke out into revolt against Persia, the Athenians sent them assistance and joined in the burning of Sardis (see pp 101 ff). This insult to Persian majesty was too great to be overlooked, and we are told that Darius asked who the Athenians were, then he took a bow and solemnly shot an arrow into the air, praying for revenge upon this new foe, and, lest he should forget, he bade a slave say thrice every day at dinner-time, "Sue, remember the Athenians."

For a few precious years, during which the state grew strong, the Athenians escaped the consequences of their rash act. But, when the Ionians had been crushed, Darius was free to carry out his long-deferred revenge. Learning, no doubt, from Hippias and other exiles of the jealousies which

separated the Greeks from one another, he sent heralds to every state to make the usual demand for "earth and water", in the hopes of sowing discord among his foes. The Athenians, feeling that there was no hope of peace, hurled the herald from the cliff whence criminals were thrown and bade him take the earth from there, the Spartans showed a similar sense of grim humour by throwing the envoy into a well. Thus the two leading states of Greece bade defiance to the barbarian, and the common danger made them forget their quarrel.

Moreover the oligarchical party at Athens was always friendly to Sparta, and the action of the Aeginetans, who with some states of Central and Northern Greece had given the required tokens of submission, knit them still more closely together. Cleomenes threatened the Aeginetans. His colleague Demaratus, as usual, opposed him. Cleomenes, therefore, bribed the oracle at Delphi to say that Demaratus was no true son of the previous king, and got him deposed. Then he attacked Aegina and enforced peace between them and Athens by delivering to the Athenians ten of the most important Aeginetans as hostages. Demaratus fled to Darius. Thus Sparta and Athens had a common fear of the return of their exiles backed by a foreign force, and, no longer troubled by disloyalty at their doors, presented a united front against the invader.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 What did Athens owe to Peisistratus?
- 4 What were the unusual features of Cleisthenes' constitution?
- 5 Compare it with our own constitution

## CHAPTER IX

## IONIA AND PERSIA

**The Asiatic Greeks** Having thus traced the course of the history of the mainland Greeks to the moment of the Persian invasion, we must now go back to the Greeks of Asia Minor and see how they had fallen into the hands of the barbarian. Of the history of these Greeks we unfortunately know even less than we do about that of their European kinsmen. We get only glimpses from time to time of incidents and personalities of the various states, but we have enough information to show that their political development followed the usual course. In the early days monarchy was not unknown, but it soon disappeared. Owing to the commercial importance of the towns, the oligarchy that followed was one of wealth rather than birth, and the behaviour of the ruling class soon provoked the usual faction fights, till tyrannies sprang up and fell and finally the people claimed their own.

In some ways, however, the Asiatic Greeks were different from the rest. In the first place their geographical position gave them an advantage. Living as they did in rich and fertile plains between the kingdoms of Asia and the Aegean Sea, they were astride the trade routes and rose to a pitch of wealth and prosperity far higher than that of their contemporaries in Greece. Miletus for instance was of much greater importance than Corinth, in spite of all the advantages of the Isthmus. The climate too had its effect. Instead of being dry and bracing, it had a soft and languid air, and this quality, combined with the unwholesome influences of Oriental religion and civilisation, produced an effeminacy, a love of luxury and comfort, and a marked absence of the more virile and noble qualities which were the proper heritage of the Greeks. Yet

if the character thus formed was degenerate in many ways, at the same time there was developed a love of refinement and of intellectual life. If Homer himself was not really an inhabitant of Chios, yet most of the bards who composed the epic poems and heroic lays lived near the Asiatic shore. Lesbos will ever be famous for Alcaeus, the singer of wine and war, and Sappho, the poetess of love. Thales of Miletus, Heracleitus of Ephesus, and many another wise man of Ionia, were the first to probe the secrets of Nature and enquire what were the causes of the universe.

**Lydia** The Asiatic kingdom which had most intercourse with the Greeks, and through which came all other Oriental influences, was that of Lydia. Sardis, its capital, stood on the river Hermus, one of the natural routes from the interior to the sea. Up to the year 700 B.C. the relations of the Greeks and Lydians had been uniformly good. But soon after that date there came to the throne of Sardis a new dynasty, of which Gyges was the founder. This line of princes adopted a new policy and was intent upon extending its dominions to the Aegean shore. The Greek towns were attacked, and it would have gone hard with them had not an unexpected thing occurred. This was the invasion of the Cimmerians, a wild tribe from the Crimea, who, hard pressed by Scythians behind them, left their homes and poured into Asia Minor. For more than fifty years they ravaged the land, the Lydian monarchy was in the greatest danger, but proved a bulwark for the Greeks, even the mighty Assyrian empire of Nineveh was assailed. When, towards the end of the century, the Cimmerians were expelled, the Lydian monarchs again resumed their designs against the Greeks. Their object was not to destroy, far from it. They had an immense admiration for the Greeks, and the temple of Delphi never received richer gifts than from the Lydian kings. What they desired was to hold the commerce and the wealth that the Greeks enjoyed by virtue of their position. But, do what they would, the Lydians could make no impression upon Miletus under its tyrant Thrasybulus. For years they raided the Milesian



territory, but at last they realised the futility of their efforts. The Lydians had no ships, Miletus was open to the sea. Peace was made with the Milesians, and attention was turned eastwards to resist the advancing power of the Medes.

**Croesus, 560—546 B.C.** Croesus was the last and the most powerful of the Lydian kings. The Greek towns, too jealous of one another to combine, could do nothing against him. Even Ephesus fell into his hands. Miletus gave no help, the town was still in alliance with the Lydians, and was moreover in a state of party strife unparalleled even in the annals of Greek city-life. When the firm hand of Thrasybulus was gone, the democracy beat the children of the oligarchs to death, while their opponents retaliated by coating young and old alike with pitch and burning them alive. Thus the Lydians reached the sea. The islands, however, were safe, they had fleets of their own and could defy the enemy. It is said that Croesus had dreams of sea-empire too, but such projects were never realised. Yet on land he was supreme. All western Asia Minor was in his hands, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, from the Aegean to the Halys which marked the boundary of the Medes. His wealth was unbounded: the tribute of the cities of Ionia, the produce of the fertile plains, the gold mines and alluvial deposits of the river-beds, the trade of east and west,—all went to swell the sum of his vast riches. On the Greeks he created a deep impression, he cultivated their friendship, he welcomed them to his court, he allied himself with Sparta, he offered fabulous treasure to the Delphic god to win the support of the oracle. Such was the man who was about to furnish Greece with the proverbial example of "Nemesis" waiting for excess, who was to plunge with dramatic suddenness from the pinnacle of prosperity into the abyss.

**Destruction of Nineveh, 606 B.C.** The Semitic empire of the Assyrians had for centuries been the chief power of the east, but, though the might of Nineveh had enslaved the Phoenicians, had carried away the Israelites into captivity, and had cut short the borders of Egypt, yet its sovereigns had

barely come into contact with the Greeks Just before 600 B C the empire came to a violent end Its subject-province of Babylon rose in revolt under the father of Nebuchadnezzar, and joined hands with the Medes of the eastern mountains, who for a century had asserted their independence The combined armies defeated the Assyrians, and Nineveh was destroyed The lowland provinces south and west fell to Babylon, and we all know how Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and carried away the Jews The mountain districts of the north became the empire of the Medes It is with the Medes and their cousins of Persia that we must now concern ourselves

**The Medes and Persians** The Medes and Persians were Aryan-speaking tribes, akin in language at least to the Greeks themselves, and belonging to the races of the Eur-Asiatic mountain belt Coming from the high table-land of western Central Asia, they settled among the mountains that lie to the east of the Euphrates-Tigris valley, which is called Mesopotamia The southern tribes were the Persians, the northern were the Medes In common with all Aryans they worshipped the sun, the "father of light", but under their great prophet Zoroaster they had developed a dual system of religious belief the world was created and ruled by Ormuzd, the benevolent spirit of light and wisdom, against him strove Ahriman, the evil spirit of darkness and wickedness Both were spirits, no statues were made to represent them in the form of men The Persians kept their fire worship with fanatical zeal, the Medes under their priests, "the Magi", had in some respects fallen away from the true faith Besides being bound by a community of language, manners, and religion, both Medes and Persians were ruled by chiefs of the ancient royal house of Achaemenes

The two nations were of a fine and vigorous stock The Persians, however, kept themselves more free from admixture with surrounding tribes, and "they instructed their children in only three things to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth The greatest disgrace is to tell a lie, the next worst is

to fall into debt " This was the foe who was soon to meet the Greeks and for more than a thousand years was to head the forces of the East against the West But we must bear in mind that Medes and Persians were only the leaders of the East The masses with whom the West came in conflict were the motley mob of Orientals, cowardly, degenerate, effeminate, and enslaved, largely of Semitic origin, corrupted by immoral Semitic religion and decayed Semitic civilisation

**Median empire** For a time the Medes had been under the Assyrian yoke, but about 700 B C they had made themselves independent A hundred years later their king Cyaxares had joined with Babylon to destroy Nineveh and divide the spoils The Median empire from its capital of Ecbatana now stretched south-eastwards over Persia and north-westwards into Asia Minor, till upon the river Halys it met the kingdom of Lydia

**Persian empire** Cyrus, 549—529 B C Suddenly in the year 549 B C a new power arose Cyrus, a Persian Achaemenid prince of Elam, a district east of Babylon, reigned at Susa under Astyages the Mede Choosing the moment when his suzerain was at war with Babylon, Cyrus attacked and defeated him in battle Astyages was unpopular and was delivered by his own army to the conqueror, while Cyrus, as one of the royal race, was accepted by the Medes The change was so easily made that to the Greeks the power of Cyrus was still that of the Medes, and "to medise" was always the word for the common Greek practice of intrigue with Persia

**Fall of Sardis, 546 B C** Cyrus now set out upon a career of conquest, eastwards and westwards, north and south he marched Croesus of Lydia, in alliance with Sparta, Babylon, and Egypt, determined to crush the new danger at once Blindly relying upon the Delphic oracle which told him, "Croesus by crossing the Halys will destroy a great empire," he rushed upon his doom Without waiting for his allies' arrival, he crossed the Halys and at Pteria fought a drawn battle against Cyrus He then retired upon Sardis, thinking that the enemy was too crippled to pursue The

Persians, however, followed, drove him into his capital, and stormed the town after a siege of only fourteen days. Croesus himself fell into the hands of the conqueror and was granted his life. Such was the sudden end of the greatest monarch with whom the Greeks had come in touch. Retribution for his over-weening pride indeed had fallen upon him. The favourite moral of the Greeks had received another illustration, and the story had to be dramatically told. Therefore the Greeks wove the tale that Cyrus bade the prisoner be burnt alive. As the flames rose, Croesus cried out upon the name of Solon, who had bidden him call no man happy till his life was ended happily. Cyrus heard and asked the meaning of the cry; then, reflecting that fortune might play him too a similar trick, he gave orders to release his captive. But the pyre was blazing, and no human aid availed. At the critical moment Apollo came to the rescue of the man who had honoured his shrines. Clouds gathered suddenly, and a violent storm of rain extinguished the flames.

**Persian conquest of Ionia** With the fall of Sardis a new period opened in Greek history. Hitherto Lydia, partly Greek and partly Asiatic, had acted as a barrier. Henceforward Greece and Persia stood face to face,—Greece, a hundred scattered towns and villages on the Mediterranean shores, Persia, a vast empire obeying the will of one man and stretching eastwards to the Indus and the borders of Thibet. The Greeks of Asia were paralysed. If Croesus had fallen, who could resist? Miletus, which alone had remained independent of Lydia and had taken no part against the Persian, was permitted to make a treaty as a vassal state, the citizens of other states had fought in the armies of Croesus and refused the offer of Cyrus to desert, their towns therefore could expect no terms. Yet Cyrus was no brutal conqueror, no massacres or acts of cruelty stained his name. Submit they must, pay tribute, and supply the Persian forces with contingents. But they might trade as they pleased, and, within limits, administer their own affairs, provided that they accepted tyrants. It was easier to keep an eye on one

man than on a republican government. But the names of freedom and "autonomy" were ever dear to the Greeks, and, however light the yoke, they would know they were under a foreign master. Thales, the philosopher, urged them to combine, with one central government, Bias of Priene bade them leave their homes and sail together to the west. Some followed the advice of the latter. The people of Teos migrated to Abdera in Thrace, the citizens of Phocaea attempted to settle in Corsica, but, expelled by Etruscans and Carthaginians, found new homes at last in Italy and in their old colony of Marseilles. Combination, however, was impossible to the Greeks, it meant the surrender of their independence, and so city after city, when it had made a futile and feeble resistance, opened its gates to Harpagus, the general of Cyrus. The islands too submitted. Samos alone, under its famous tyrant Polycrates, held out, his strength lay on the sea, as yet the Persians had no ships.

**Death of Cyrus** Meanwhile Cyrus himself had other work to do than attending to the reduction of a few paltry towns. His campaigns carried him to the borders of India and the Pamirs. Then he turned back and in 538 B.C. attacked Babylon. Presently it fell into his hands, bringing with its fall the rule of Mesopotamia and Syria. Finally he died fighting against the distant tribes of Central Asia.

**Cambyzes, 529—521 B.C.** He was succeeded by his son Cambyzes, who, in his short reign of eight years, added Egypt to the Persian dominions, and, through the submission of Tyre and Cyprus, procured the fleets which were indispensable for any real attack upon Greece.

**Pseudo-Smerdis** But the cruelties of Cambyzes had led him to murder secretly his brother Smerdis, who was his heir. Taking advantage of his absence in Egypt and the general ignorance of the crime, the Magian priests organised a revolt and placed one of their own order upon the throne as Smerdis. Cambyzes turned back to crush the revolt, but committed suicide upon the way. For a few months the impostor reigned.

Darius, 521—485 B C But suspicions were aroused, and Darius, son of Hystaspes, a Persian prince of the royal blood, helped by six friends, succeeded in slaying the priest and took the kingdom. Himself a true Persian, Darius set to work to organise his realm on Persian lines. Persian nobles were preferred to positions of honour and trust, a Persian body-guard formed the flower of his armies, the true Persian faith of Zoroaster was restored, and every effort was made to crush "the lie", the heretical religion of the Median priests. But Darius had a difficult task. The Medes and the Babylonians revolted from him, and the empire of Cyrus fell to pieces. It was only after years of fighting that all was subdued again.

**Organisation of Persia** Then the king proved that he was not only a general like Cyrus, but a statesman as well. The whole empire was reorganised in districts. Over each was placed a civil governor, or "satrap", a military commander, and a secretary who had charge of the finances and reported to the capital. These three were independent of one another and dependent only on the king. Thus in every satrapy the king had two officers to check the ambitions and the treachery of the third. Every satrapy was called upon to furnish contingents in time of war, and to pay a tribute which was fixed by the central government according to the wealth of the district. This assessment, the work of good government, roused as much criticism as did the *Domesday Book* of William the Conqueror, and the remark was made among the Persians that Darius was a trader. Persia alone was free from taxation and was governed directly by the king. Finally, the whole empire was knit together by a system of royal roads and posts.

**Scythian expedition.** When order was at length restored and firmly established, Darius turned his thoughts to further extension of his realm. From interfering in the deserts of Arabia he wisely refrained, but India felt the weight of his arm, and the Punjab became a Persian satrapy. About 512 B C he fixed his attention upon the west. It was said that he desired to avenge the ravages of the Scythians upon Media.

a century before. It is more probable that he realised that Asia is liable to attack from Europe by the land-bridges of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and wished to secure his boundary in that direction. Calling for contingents from Ionia, Darius at the head of an enormous army crossed the Bosphorus by a bridge of boats and made his way into Thrace. The Greek towns of that district submitted without a struggle, and most of the native tribes followed their example. But the hour of Greece had not yet come. Turning northwards the king made his way to the Danube to attack the Scythians. A bridge of boats across the Danube was constructed by the Ionians, and the Greek contingents were left behind to guard it. For two months Darius pursued the Scythians in vain, they defended themselves by retiring and leaving the enemy nothing at which to strike. Other invaders since the days of Darius have had a similar experience of the Russian plains. Meanwhile the Greeks who guarded the bridge were tempted to destroy it. Miltiades the Athenian, who was tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese, urged its destruction and that of the Persian army, Histiaeus of Miletus and the tyrants of Ionia, realising that their own rule depended upon the rule of the Persian despot, insisted upon keeping it safe. At last Darius returned, after a fruitless expedition, and went back to Susa, taking with him Histiaeus who had saved his life. Megabazus with 80,000 men was left in Thrace to complete the conquest of the district. He subdued the opposition of Greeks and Thracians who refused to submit, and induced even Amyntas, king of Macedonia, to become a vassal of the Great King. Thus the boundary of Persia was brought right up to the very gates of Greece.

The Ionian revolt, 499—493 B.C. At the same time Persia was encroaching across the sea too. After the death of Polycrates the great island of Samos had fallen into the power of Persia. Now Artaphernes, the satrap at Sardis, made an attack upon Naxos also, the largest and most prosperous island of the Cyclades. Aristagoras, the cousin and successor of Histiaeus as tyrant of Miletus, proposed to win

the island for the king as a stepping-stone to Greece. He was entrusted with a fleet, but Artaphernes, suspecting him, associated a Persian with him in the command. The two quarrelled, and the expedition failed. Aristagoras dared not face the satrap and knew not what to do. At that moment, it is said, he received a message from Histiaeus begging him to raise a revolt in Ionia so that he might be sent back from Susa to quell it. This decided Aristagoras. He preached revolt among the Greek towns, who were chafing at their loss of independence, he laid down his own tyranny, and the other towns expelled or slew their tyrants. Help was sought from Greece. Aristagoras himself went across the Aegean. His bribes almost prevailed upon Cleomenes of Sparta, he was offering him fifty talents<sup>1</sup>, when Gorgo, the king's little daughter, cried out, "Father, the stranger will corrupt you unless you get up and go." The bribe was refused, and Aristagoras went to Athens. There he met with a different reception. The Athenians, angry with Artaphernes for the support he had given to Hippias and for his insulting demands for submission and the restoration of the tyrant, eagerly listened to the Milesian appeal. They sent a force of twenty ships, and Eretria of Euboea added five more. "These ships," says Herodotus, "were the beginning of evils for both Greeks and Barbarians."

**Herodotus.** For the whole history of the Persian war Herodotus is our chief authority. He was born in the Dorian town of Halicarnassus, near to Rhodes, about 484 B.C., and, after travelling widely in Greece and the Mediterranean lands, went to Athens and settled down with Athenian colonists at Thurii in southern Italy. He was the first of Greek historians and wrote the story of the war between East and West. He was not an accurate critic of truth and fable, though he did his best to sift his evidence and wrote what he thought was true. But his truly Greek superstitious regard for oracles and his love of a dramatic tale, coupled with the fact that he

<sup>1</sup> £12,000



travelled in Greece half a century after the events of which he writes, when the hard facts of the war were, especially at Athens, becoming coloured with the glow of romantic memory, make it necessary for us to look upon his statements with a certain amount of caution while accepting their general truth

**The burning of Sardis, 499 B.C.** When the Athenians reached Miletus they found the forces from the various Greek towns there assembled. It was suggested to make a bold attack on Sardis before the Persian armies had collected. The stroke was carried out, Artaphernes was surprised and driven into the citadel, and the town was set on fire. But now townsfolk and Persians combined against the Greeks, reinforcements began to arrive, and the raiders retired, to be pursued and routed as they reached the coast at Ephesus. The Athenians then sailed home and gave no further help to their kinsmen. Probably the hostility of Aegina prevented them from crossing the Aegean again.

**Failure of the revolt.** For the Ionians, however, there could be no turning back. They spread the revolt as far as they could. Byzantium and the towns of the Hellespont, Caria too in the south, and the island of Cyprus, all joined in the rebellion. But presently four Persian armies were in the field. One, with the Phoenician fleet, soon recovered Cyprus, the Hellespontine towns were easily subdued, only Aeolis, Ionia, and Caria continued to resist. Meanwhile Aristagoras was amongst the first to despair and desert, he fled to Thrace, where soon afterwards he was slain. No sooner was he gone than the shifty Histiaeus reappeared. Though the suspicions of Darius were aroused, the crafty Greek managed to allay them, and, under a promise to suppress the revolt, he was permitted to return. Artaphernes was not so easily deceived. He plainly said to Histiaeus, "The truth is this. You made this shoe, and Aristagoras put it on." In terror the Greek fled to Chios, and from there tried to stir up Persians also to revolt. But because of his double-dealing the Chians would not trust him, nor would the Milesians have him back. He therefore turned pirate, seized Byzantium, and plundered the

ships that passed the Bosphorus. Eventually he was captured by Artaphernes and promptly crucified.

**Battle of Lade** The Persians had meantime concentrated their armies upon Miletus, and their fleet of 600 ships blockaded it from the sea. The rebels now staked their all upon a naval battle. Ships from the various towns, especially from Miletus, Chios, Lesbos, and Samos, made up a total of 353. But the usual jealousies kept the fleet from working together, the Milesians refused to obey the orders of the admiral because he was a Phocaean, and, when the Persians came against them off the island of Lade, the Samian ships, with the exception of eleven, set sail for home. The Lesbians followed suit, and their example was quickly copied by most of the rest. Only the Chians, to their honour, made a valiant and stubborn fight. But they were hopelessly outnumbered, and the remnant of their squadron was at last forced to fly.

**Fall of Miletus, 494 B.C.** Miletus still held out. But at length the end came. The city was stormed and taken, most of the male inhabitants were slain, the women and children were sold into slavery, the temples were burnt, and such of the population as were spared were transported to the shores of the Persian Gulf. With the fall of Miletus the Ionian revolt was practically at an end. A few months sufficed to stamp out the embers of the rebellion and deal out punishment. Such was the miserable result of a rising which was characterised throughout by shirking, treachery, and selfishness, and revealed how difficult it was for Greeks with their petty jealousies to combine for the common cause of their race.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. What were the chief ancient civilisations?
4. What advantages of position did Lydia possess?
5. Compare Greeks and Persians.
6. Why was the Ionian revolt a failure?
7. Which character of this chapter appeals to you most?

## CHAPTER X

## MARATHON

**Expedition of Mardonius** With the capture of Miletus and the end of the Ionian revolt, Darius could now turn his attention to the insolent Athenians and Eretrians, who had roused his wrath by taking part in the burning of Sardis. Accordingly an expedition was prepared and put under the command of Mardonius, with orders to chastise the two cities and gain the submission of Greece itself. The army was to march by land by way of the Hellespont and the coast of Thrace, while a fleet was to accompany it to convey supplies and act in concert with the troops. For the battle of Lade had taught the Persians that the co-operation of a fleet was necessary in warfare against the maritime Greeks. But the peril was averted from Greece for the time. As the fleet was sailing past the promontory of Mt. Athos it was caught in a fierce northerly gale and dashed to pieces upon the rocky shore. The army too suffered severely, for, after having received the timely submission of the Macedonians, it was attacked and roughly handled by a Thracian tribe, and Mardonius himself was wounded. The Thracians, indeed, were punished, but the whole force was so weakened by these disasters that Mardonius abandoned the expedition.

**Second expedition** Nothing deterred from his design by this failure, Darius now set to work to prepare another armament. Meantime, urged no doubt by Hippias and other Greek exiles who well knew the character of their countrymen, he sent heralds to all the Greek states demanding "earth and water" as the tokens of submission. What treatment the heralds encountered at Athens and at Sparta has already been related (p. 91). Against these two, the leading states of Greece, it was now to be war to the knife.

In the year 490 B C the preparations were complete Datis, a Mede, and Artaphernes, the king's nephew, were in command, taking with them the aged Hippias, whose knowledge of Attica and the Athenians might be of the utmost use and who was to be restored to his tyranny The expedition, 600 ships besides transports for the horses, set sail from Cilicia, where the army, horse and foot, had been taken on board the fleet Coasting along till they reached Samos, they then struck across the Aegean Sea There should be no repetition of the Athos disaster On the way Naxos was captured, but the sanctity of Delos was, for political reasons, respected Thence they sailed to Euboea to punish Eretria The Athenians had ordered their colonists in Euboea to assist the town, but, since the Eretrians were by no means agreed whether to resist or to submit, the settlers accepted the advice of a leading citizen and crossed over into Attica Eretria was besieged for six days, but treachery opened the gates The town and its temples were plundered and burnt and the inhabitants enslaved, according to the commands of Darius

Marathon, 490 B C Then, at the advice of Hippias, the Persians crossed the straits and landed at Marathon Marathon lies on the east side of Attica, fully twenty miles from Athens Between Mt Pentelicus and the sea lies a plain some five miles in length and one and a half in breadth Here the Persians could beach their ships with safety, while the plain would supply water and exercise for the horses and a field in which the cavalry could act if the Athenians should have the temerity to attack them That, however, they did not expect Their object was to draw the Athenian army away, so that the fleet might then sail round Attica and find the city defenceless Intrigues, as usual, were on foot The oligarchical, pro-Spartan party had recovered much influence Their opponents, the party of the Alcmaeonidae, who once before had helped Peisistratus, though they had also expelled him and had later driven out Hippias his son, seem to have been prepared to admit the tyrant and accept the Persian suzerainty If Darius wished to enslave Athenians, there were oligarchs enough to satisfy his wrath

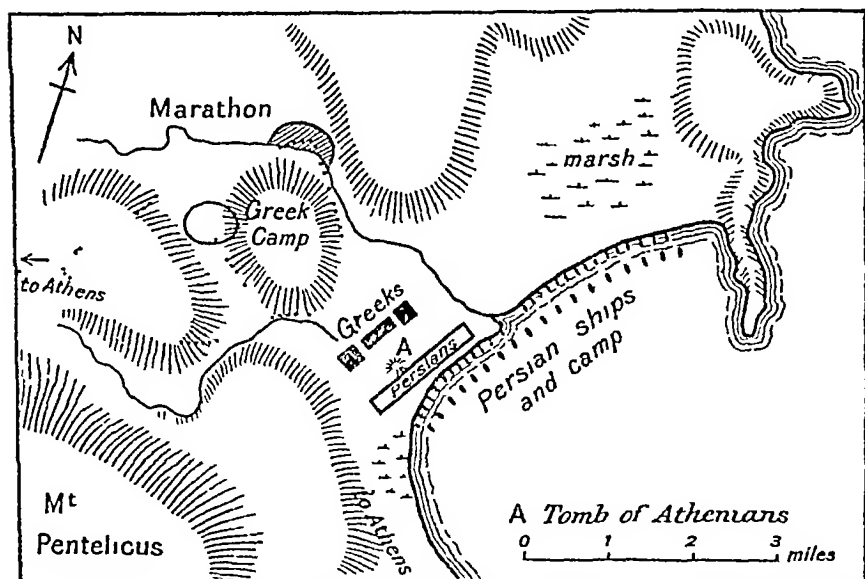
Meanwhile the Athenians had called out their army, the ten regiments of hoplites from the tribes, each under its own general, the whole, 9000 in number, being under the command of the polemarch Callimachus. Besides the hoplites a certain number of slaves had been enrolled as light-armed troops. With these they had to face an overwhelming force.

**Pheidippides** Sparta, however, would give help. The speediest runner of the day, Pheidippides by name, was despatched from Athens with all haste, and such good progress did he make that on the evening of the second day he had run the 150 miles and reached his goal. The Spartans at once promised assistance, but superstitious scruples forbade them to start for five days, until the moon should have passed its full.

**Miltiades** After Pheidippides' departure from Athens the generals held council, whether to leave the city and march to Marathon or whether to await the arrival of the Persians. Among the generals was Miltiades. This man's uncle, the elder Miltiades, one of the aristocratic party of the Plain, had left Athens, perhaps as an exile, in the days of Peisistratus and had become the tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese. His father, Cimon, had been first banished and then recalled by Peisistratus, and finally murdered by Hippias. He himself had then fled from Athens and succeeded his uncle as tyrant of the Chersonese. When Darius was in Scythia it was he who had proposed to break the bridge over the Danube and leave the Persian army to perish. He had joined in the Ionic revolt and had captured the islands of Lemnos and Imbros. Driven out from his tyranny by the Persians, he had with difficulty escaped to Athens and had given the two islands to the people of his native city. In gratitude they had supported him, and when his opponents, the Alcmaeonidae, had prosecuted him for tyranny, they had acquitted him and elected him one of the generals for the year. He now, when the council of war was divided, urged the polemarch to give his casting vote for fighting, lest the Persians should arrive before Athens and traitors should open the gates. Callimachus

fell in with his views, and the Athenian army marched out to Marathon

The position at Marathon There they bivouacked near the shrine of Heracles in a valley on the north-east side of Pentelicus The situation was admirably chosen In their valley, well above the plain, they were safe from the enemy, yet they could watch the movements of the Persians, and make a flank attack upon them should they march upon Athens by either road, the one to the north, the other to the south of the mountain Presently they were joined by a body of 1000



MAP 5 BATTLE OF MARATHON 490 B.C.

Plataeans, who did not forget the help given to them by the Athenians against the Thebans Then for some days they watched the enemy and awaited the arrival of the Spartans The Persians had no intention of attacking them, they were waiting for news from Athens that their partisans were in a position to open the gates At last came the message to be ready, and the Persians embarked their cavalry and some of their infantry The rest were to be left in the plain to detain the Athenian army at Marathon

The battle Herodotus says it was the day of supreme

command for Miltiades. It is more likely that Callimachus was in command, but he relied, as before, on the advice of Miltiades. Seeing that the Persians on shore no longer vastly outnumbered them and that the formidable cavalry had embarked, and perhaps suspecting the design of sailing round to Athens, Miltiades urged instant battle. The Athenians deployed into the plain and formed their line, strong on the wings, weak in the centre, so as to extend their ranks and prevent the Persians from surrounding them. Callimachus took the right, the post of honour, the Plataeans were on the left. Thus they advanced at the double. The charge of the heavy infantry, many deep, upon the wings shattered the enemy, but the weak centre in its turn was broken by the Persian soldiers, the pick of the troops, who were stationed there, and it was forced back towards the mountain. But perfect discipline prevailed among the Greeks. Instead of pursuing the routed enemy, the two wings turned in, united, and attacked the Persian centre from behind. Thus hemmed in, the Persians were at a great disadvantage, presently they broke and fled in wild confusion, some towards a marsh which lay to the north, others towards the ships, with the Athenians in close pursuit. A grim slaughter followed as the Persians attempted to launch their vessels and clamber on board. The Athenians tried to burn or stop the ships, and succeeded in capturing seven, the brother of the poet Aeschylus had his hand hacked off as he was holding on to a Persian galley, Callimachus, the polemarch, was slain after conspicuous deeds of valour. At last the Persians got away, leaving their camp in the hands of the Greeks and over 6000 corpses upon the field.

**The attempt upon Athens** At this moment a shield flashed in the September sun from the summit of Pentelicus. It was the long expected signal. Immediately the whole Persian fleet steered for the south. The Greeks too saw the shield and the direction of the ships. Suspecting treachery within the city, they at once marched back, and, when the fleet of the Persians arrived off Phalerum, the Athenian



*The English Photographic Co*

**Marathon**

(Looking east from near the Athenian camp The cross marks the site of the battle Euboia rises in the background)





army was drawn up in front of the city ready to meet them. The Persians knew their chance was lost, the gates would never be opened. In spite of the overwhelming force which they still had, they did not try to land. It seems strange that they made no further attempt, either in Attica or elsewhere, for their armament was still formidable. But their main object seems to have been the chastisement of Eretria and Athens, not an attack, as yet, upon Sparta or the rest of Greece. The season was advanced, supplies of food and water, too, were running short, especially for the cavalry, the unexpected check had warned them that a campaign was likely to be protracted, and for that they were not prepared. Therefore, after waiting a short time, they weighed anchor and sailed away to Asia.

After the battle. A day or two after the battle the Lacedaemonian force arrived, 2000 Spartans with their attendant Helots. They had faithfully carried out their promise, and, directly the full moon set them free, had marched for Attica so rapidly as to cover 150 miles in less than three days! But there was nothing for them to do. They begged to see the corpses of the Medes and went to Marathon to view the scene, then, having expressed their praise and admiration for the achievement, they went home. The Athenian loss in the battle had been absurdly small, besides Plataeans and slaves only 192 were slain. These were buried on the spot where they fell, and the place was marked by a mound which remains to this day. The fight was commemorated at Delphi by a treasury which the Athenians built out of the Persian spoils, and at Athens by a famous picture of the battle depicted on the walls of the Painted Portico<sup>1</sup>. But, above all, those who fought at Marathon were enshrined in the memories of their countrymen as the heroes of the city's golden age.

The effect of the battle. The battle of Marathon was of great importance. It was not so much that Greece was thereby saved from invasion for the time. The great effect was that upon Athens herself. From a second-rate position

in Greece she had suddenly sprung to the front as the champion of Hellas against the hitherto invincible barbarian. Domestic intrigue and foreign invasion alike had been powerless. Democrats and oligarchs alike had proved themselves and come out of the test triumphant. With a new and unwonted confidence in themselves the people now pressed forward on the road of greatness.

**Fate of Miltiades** The hero of Marathon was Miltiades. He had urged that the army should go out to fight, his advice in both strategy and tactics had weighed most with Callimachus, tradition asserted that he had actually held the command and that the others had surrendered their powers to him. When he had first returned to Athens he had been regarded with some suspicion as an ex-tyrant and one of the old nobles. But the people had dared to trust him, his oligarchical sympathies had helped to ensure the assistance of oligarchical Sparta, he had saved Athens, no wonder his popularity was unbounded. Soon after the battle he appeared before the people and asked for seventy ships and money for an expedition, promising to enrich the city greatly. In their blind enthusiasm they hastily voted him all he asked, without even demanding to know his object. Then in order to satisfy a private grudge he sailed against the island of Paros. It is true that Paros had joined the Persians and furnished a ship against the Athenians, yet the expedition was in no way necessary. The attack failed, and Miltiades returned wounded in the thigh. The Alcmaeonidae, who since Marathon had not dared to say a word against the popular idol, now saw their chance. Xanthippus, the leader of that faction, prosecuted him for having deceived the Athenians. The people, with the usual fickleness and ingratitude of a mob, veered round with this new wind. Miltiades was condemned to pay a heavy fine, and was saved from the extreme penalty only by the remembrance of past services. But he died of his wound, and the fine was paid by his son, Cimon, to clear his father's memory.

**Death of Darius, 485 B.C.** Greece now had respite from

Persian attacks for a period of ten years. It was not that Darius was dismayed. But in Egypt a revolt broke out which demanded immediate attention. Darius himself died as he led his army thither, and was succeeded by his son Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the Bible, the first of a series of incompetent and cruel rulers whose misgovernment enabled the Greeks to attack and finally to overturn the Persian empire.

**Death of Cleomenes** Another of the great men of the day who now passed from the scene was Cleomenes, the Spartan king. We have seen how he had got rid of his rival and colleague, Demaratus, by bribing the Delphic oracle. When his trick was discovered he fled from Sparta and began stirring up Arcadian states against her. The ephors thought it wise to invite him back. But he had always been liable to attacks of madness and presently he was placed under restraint. One day he was found dead, horribly mutilated, by his own hand as the official version of the story ran. So perished the last Spartan king who tried to act as a monarch and not as the servant of the ephors.

**War with Aegina** His death plunged Athens into war with Aegina again. The Aeginetans, freed from fear of him, now claimed their hostages who had been deposited at Athens as pledges of their good behaviour during the Persian danger. But the Athenians, unjustly though prudently, refused to give them up. They would be useful in case of further Aeginetan raids. Thus a desultory war broke out once more, the details of which were as uncertain and insignificant as the result was important in bringing about the further development of Athenian naval power. This naval policy must for ever be associated with the name of Themistocles.

**Themistocles** Though not born of pure Attic descent, for his mother was a Carian, Themistocles was a typical Athenian. Shifty and double-dealing, patriotic when it suited his purposes, but selfish and always leaving himself a loophole of escape should things go wrong, he was the most brilliant, ingenious, and nimble-witted statesman that Greece produced. Thucydides speaks of him as able to form a correct judgment

## GREEK HISTORY FOR SCHOOLS

on the spur of the moment without deliberation, as invariably right in his estimation of the future, and as able to carry out whatever he took in hand. He was, moreover, utterly untruthful, unscrupulous, and corrupt. Yet he was the man who saved Athens and Greece.

**Naval expansion** Already in the former stage of the Aeginetan war he had been archon, and had induced the Athenians to give up the old open roadstead of Phalerum and fortify the splendid harbours of the Peiræus, now he again urged the development of the new base, and, above all things, a large increase in the size of the navy. It so happened that the state was at the moment possessed of a large surplus owing to the fortunate discovery of a rich vein in the silver mines of Laurium. This it was proposed to distribute among the people. Themistocles on the other hand urged that it should be given to the wealthier citizens as a loan which, if well used, would not be required again by the state, for the building of a ship was one of the forms of service of the rich to the community. His advice was taken, the new ships were eagerly built, and in a couple of years Athens had a fleet of 200 triremes.

Themistocles did not carry his proposals without opposition. Xanthippus the Alcmaeonid and another of that faction were ostracised about this time, the family was under suspicion, no doubt, and their exile was probably due to a combination of forces between Themistocles and Cimon the aristocrat, the son of Miltiades. But the chief opponent of Themistocles was a better man than these.

**Aristeides** Aristeides was a man renowned for his imperturbable coolness and incorruptible honesty. His character was the greatest possible contrast to that of his rival. Whatever was honourable, whatever was just, whatever was the course decided by quiet judgment rather than by hot impulse, that was the course that Aristeides took. The strife between him and Themistocles was constant, arising from their diversity of character. Aristeides is reported to have said that the Athenians would have no peace until they had slain both of

them At last recourse was had to ostracism, it may be over the naval question The votes were given against Aristides The value of the opinion may be gauged by the remark of one man that he voted against Aristides because he was so tired of hearing him called "the Just" And so, for good or evil, when the Persians came again, Athens was under the leadership of Themistocles

## SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Was Marathon of real importance?
- 4 Draw from memory a plan of the battle
- 5 What do you think of the conduct of Greek politicians?
- 6 Describe the battle from the point of view of (a) a Greek, (b) a Persian
- 7 Why did the Persians abandon the expedition?

## CHAPTER XI

## THERMOPYLAE AND SALAMIS

Xerxes, 485—465 B.C. When Xerxes had put an end to the Egyptian revolt, he was free to turn his attention to Greece He was, however, a very different man from his father He was not a great general nor even a brave man, to him the honour of Persia was nothing He was a cruel and capricious despot, indolent, selfish, and vain To his vanity, then, his advisers appealed, and through his vanity he was persuaded to take up the task that Darius had left him

Preparations for invasion Four years were occupied in preparations Xerxes himself would accompany the expedition, to honour it with his royal presence and take note of the valiant and the cowardly, but to Mardonius, who was

anxious to retrieve his former failure, and to five other generals was entrusted the work and the responsibility. The route was to be that of the first enterprise, the army marching across the Hellespont and along the coast, while the fleet kept in touch with it. Mardonius was impressed with the disaster that had happened to his ships at Athos and wished to avoid a repetition of it. The neck of land which joins Mt Athos to the mainland is only one and a half miles in width, and it would have been easy to transport the ships across on rollers, as was constantly done at Corinth. But the childish love of display which marked the king suggested a greater work. For three years gangs of men from all the subject nations toiled under the lash to dig a canal wide enough to take two ships abreast. All this to avoid twenty-five miles of dangerous coast and to be a monument of Xerxes' greatness!

Meanwhile at various points along the route huge stores of provisions were collected for both man and beast. Besides these huge depots, every town along the line of march was ordered to provide food for the whole army for one day. The cost of this was said to amount to 400 talents<sup>1</sup>, a ruinous sum for any but the largest towns. The town of Abdera was not noted for its wit, yet one of its citizens bade his fellows thank the gods that the Persian army ate but one meal a day.

For the crossing of the Hellespont elaborate preparations were made. The Egyptians and the Phoenicians each built a bridge of boats a mile long across the channel near Abydos. A violent storm arose and swept the works away as soon as they were completed. Thereupon the "king of kings" flew into a violent rage. With childish folly he bade a flogging of three hundred lashes be given to the Hellespont and a pair of fetters cast into the sea, while he gave orders to cut off the heads of the engineers who were responsible for the work. Two other bridges were then constructed. These were built obliquely across the channel, so that the

<sup>1</sup> £96,000

strain of the current came along and not across the line, 360 ships supported the one, 314 the other. The ships were anchored in their places, and then six huge cables were stretched across them from shore to shore. Upon these were laid logs, brushwood, and earth, and a fence was built on each side to prevent the animals from being alarmed at the sight of the water.

**The army of Xerxes.** In the autumn of 481 B.C. Xerxes came from Susa to meet the army in Cappadocia. Thither had been called together contingents from every nation, even from the remotest parts of the empire: there were negroes from Upper Egypt, clad in lion-skins and war-paint and armed with bows, darts, and clubs; Assyrians in full armour; Indian archers clothed in cotton; Libyans in leather, with stakes hardened in the fire as their only weapon; light-armed Thracians with fawn-skin boots and fox-skins on their heads; Scythians bearing battle-axes; men from Beluchistan whose helmets were the skins of horses' heads with ears erect and flowing manes. Forty-five nations placed under Persian generals contributed infantry. Besides them were a host of cavalry 80,000 strong, a camel corps, and chariots. But the pick of the troops were the Persians themselves. They wore loose caps called "tiaras", trousers, and sleeved tunics of various colours, and were protected by iron cuirasses of scale-armour and by wicker shields, while they carried bows, spears, and daggers. Both arms and dress were conspicuous for their profusion of gold and silver. The Persians supplied both horse and foot, but the most famous were the 10,000 "Immortals", the foot-guards, under the command of Hydarnes. With the Persians followed their women-folk in carriages, and a host of attendants with their baggage-train and provisions.

Such was the motley host which was brought to the invasion of Greece, an army utterly lacking in discipline, organisation, and cohesion, so huge that years were required to collect supplies to feed it and many a stream was drained dry when it drank. The numbers of the infantry alone were



said to be 1,700,000, apart from a force of 300,000 more collected in Europe on the march to Greece. So numerous were they that to count them 10,000 men were packed as close together as possible, a low wall was built round them, and this enclosure was used as the measure by which to reckon. The reason for collecting such a host was nothing but vain display and swaggering ostentation, for military efficiency the Median and Persian contingents alone would have proved far more effective.

But besides the land forces there was the fleet. Egypt, Phoenicia, and the southern shores of Asia Minor contributed 900 triremes, and the states of Asiatic Greece and the islands another 300, each ship carrying a crew of 200 men and 30 Persian marines. They were accompanied by 3000 lighter ships of war and transports.

Herodotus, in counting up the forces of the army, the camp-followers, and the fleet, puts the total of the host at five and a quarter millions. This of course is a gross exaggeration, invented after the Persian repulse in order to enhance the prowess of the Greeks. But even if we reduce the numbers to a million fighting men for the army and fleet combined, the host was by far the greatest that has ever been set in motion in the history of the world<sup>1</sup>.

**Greek preparations** Against this vast armament what had the Greeks to oppose? Of course they knew well that preparations were on foot. Indeed, when Greek spies were caught in the Persian camp, Xerxes ordered that they should be shown everything, so that on their return home they might impress upon their countrymen the futility of resistance. The Athenians perhaps had most to fear, they could not meet the storm alone, but it was also clear that the whole of Greece must fight or else submit. Athens then applied to Sparta as the military head of Greece, and in conjunction the two cities sent out invitations to all the states of Greece to send envoys to a conference at the Isthmus. For once

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon took with him to Russia less than 500,000 men, and in some battles of the Russo Japanese war 750,000 were engaged.

the common danger drew almost all the cities of Greece to common action. It was resolved to sink all private quarrels such as that of Athens and Aegina, to punish after the war any state that should "medise", and to seek for help even across the sea. Argos had not sent representatives, and she, sulky at anything that Sparta proposed, remained obstinately neutral. Crete refused assistance, at the instigation of the Delphic oracle, which, knowing the strength of Persia, was trying to "medise" without openly forfeiting the respect of Greece, and therefore was more ambiguous in its replies than usual. Corcyra readily promised 60 ships and sent them, with orders to be prevented by the wind from rounding Cape Malea until events had decided themselves. Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse, offered substantial help. By his victory at Himera in the previous year he had freed himself from the Carthaginian danger which, no doubt purposely, threatened the Greeks of the west at the moment of the Persian attack from the east<sup>1</sup>. He promised 30,000 men, food supplies, and ships, on condition that he was commander-in-chief, at least by land or by sea. But his terms neither Sparta nor Athens would deign to accept (see p. 66) *here refused*

When the conference had adjourned, heralds came from Xerxes to the Greek states demanding earth and water. Only to Athens and Sparta were none sent. They had offended too deeply in their former treatment of envoys, there was to be no pardon for them. Many of the northern and the central states gave the required signs of submission, notably Thebes, and Thessaly, which was ruled by the Aleuadae, a noble family of Larissa.

**Start of Xerxes, 480 B.C.** With the spring of 480 B.C. Xerxes began to move from Sardis, where he had spent the winter. When he came to the Hellespont and met the fleet, he mounted a marble throne and watched his host cross the bridges. At dawn the crossing began with libations and the

<sup>1</sup> Tradition placed the battle of the Himera on the same day as that of Salamis. More probably the battle took place in 481 B.C. Otherwise Gelo could not have offered help.

burning of incense For seven days and seven nights a ceaseless stream of humanity poured across the straits Thence the troops marched to the mouth of the Hebrus, where the ships again joined them, and a review of both army and fleet was held From there the host marched on, while the fleet sailed through the canal of Athos, and the two met once more at the modern Salonica

**Xerxes and Thessaly** When the news of the Persian advance reached Greece, the people of Thessaly, repudiating the action of their rulers, sent to the conference at Corinth for help in keeping the pass of Tempe, the gorge through which the Peneius flows to the sea If help were coming, they would be loyal to Greece, if none were sent, they must save themselves and join the invader A combined Spartan and Athenian force of 10,000 men was promptly sent, the Athenian contingent being led by Themistocles Joined by Thessalian cavalry they proceeded to the defile But when they had been there only a few days a messenger came from Alexander, the Macedonian king, warning them that Tempe was not the only pass, but that there were others to the west of Mt Olympus, and that the defenders were likely to be trapped in the defile without preventing the entrance of the Persians into Greece Whether the advice was given in the interest of the Persians or of the Greeks, it had its effect and the force retired The Thesalians then promptly made their peace with Xerxes, and the Persians marched through Thessaly without opposition, getting in touch with their fleet again at Halus on the west side of the gulf of Pagasae

**Thermopylae to be held** When the army from the north returned, the Greeks at Corinth discussed where next they should offer resistance Many of the Peloponnesians selfishly urged the advantages of the Isthmus Naturally Athens and the few loyal states of Central Greece opposed the plan It was the Spartans and their king Leonidas who decided that a stand should be made at the northern boundary of Central Greece There the mountain wall of Oeta rises up steeply on the south side of the Spercheus



**Thermopylae**

(The flat ground covered with a white deposit did not exist in 480 P.C.,  
the sea came almost up to the cliffs)



valley Over it goes a route by a pass 2000 ft high, leading down into the plain of Phocis and Boeotia, the track has always been in frequent use, but begins in a narrow and deep ravine, and it would have been difficult for the troops and impossible for the Persian baggage-train At the end of the mountain range is a narrow space between the cliffs and the sea, this is the famous pass of Thermopylae, four miles long from the western "gate" to Alpeni at the eastern end Though now much wider owing to the deposits brought down by the rivers and torrents and through a general uplifting of the land-level, in ancient days the road was of varying width, narrowing down in places to a single cart track By this the Persians would have to advance, this was the spot chosen for the defence of Greece

It was July, the month of the Olympic games, and moreover the Spartans were due to observe one of their own festivals The danger did not seem imminent When both festivals were over the whole Peloponnesian force would advance So indeed it was said; but the excuses were poor, and it is doubtful whether any serious effort to hold Central Greece was intended Still something had to be done to satisfy the Athenians, and it would be easy to withdraw from the pass An advance guard therefore was sent on There were 300 Spartans under king Leonidas, accompanied of course by their Helots Other troops from the Peloponnese went with him, especially Arcadians From Boeotia came 700 Thespians and 400 Thebans, for it does not seem to be the case that all the Thebans agreed with their "medising" rulers The Locrians and Phocians also joined, the latter loyal especially because of their hereditary hatred of the Thessalians The whole force amounted to something like seven thousand—seven thousand against three-quarters of a million!

Artemisium also to be held But where were the Athenians? The plan of the Greeks was to secure themselves against a flank attack from the sea or the landing of an army in their rear To prevent such a thing the fleet was

stationed off Artemisium, to guard the strait between the northern extremity of Euboea and the mainland. The naval force was composed of 324 ships, two-thirds of which were Athenian. But, since the allied squadrons, in their jealousy of the rising power of Athens, refused to serve under Themistocles, the Athenians had patriotically abandoned their proper claim to command, and Eurybiadas of Sparta was the nominal commander-in-chief. The greater part of the fleet was stationed at Artemisium, but a squadron of 53 Athenian vessels guarded the southern entrance to the Euripus. Such were the preparations of the Greeks.

**Battle of Thermopylae, 480 B.C.** When Xerxes reached the Spercheus valley, he encamped at the point where the two routes diverged, and sent forward to reconnoitre. A horseman rode up to the spot where the Greeks had rebuilt the "Phocian" wall originally constructed to repel Thessalian raids, and found the Spartans engaged in athletic exercises and combing their long hair. Demaratus, the exiled Spartan king, told Xerxes that this was a custom of his countrymen before they hazarded their lives, and that if he conquered the Spartans the resistance of Greece would collapse. Xerxes was incredulous that such a handful of men would resist him, and waited four days for them to retire. Nor did he wish to proceed further until the fleet had forced a passage, and could supply him with provisions.

On the fifth day he was enraged at their obstinacy and bade the Medes advance and bring the insolent enemy into his presence alive. The Medes moved to the attack bravely enough, but were repulsed time after time with great slaughter. Numbers were of no avail in the narrow pass, their arrows made no impression on the brazen armour of the hoplites, their short spears could not reach the Greeks armed with their long pikes. All day long the combat raged. Towards evening the Medes were called off, and the "Immortals" took their place. But the flower of the Persian troops succeeded no better, and at nightfall fighting ceased.

The next day the attack was renewed with a similar result.

The Greek contingents took it in turn to hold the pass Xerxes began to despair But in the evening treachery came to his aid A native of the district, Ephialtes by name, came and told him of a rough track over the mountain, which came down again in the pass in the rear of the Greeks The king was delighted and at once gave orders that Hydarnes and the Immortals should take the path Starting soon after sunset they climbed throughout the hours of darkness When dawn broke they found themselves on the top There a thousand Phocians were keeping guard and were roused by the rustling of the fallen leaves as the enemy marched through the oak woods Springing to arms, the Phocians were assailed by a cloud of arrows, and retired to the very summit of the mountain to sell their lives as dearly as they might But the Persians left them alone and pushed on down the empty track

Even during the night intelligence was brought to the Greeks of what was being done, and with sunrise scouts came running in to confirm the news Opinions were divided, whether to evacuate the post or not Those who wished were allowed to go It is possible that they were expected to attack the Immortals as they came down the mountain, but it seems that they did not do so Leonidas refused to abandon his post With his 300 Spartans and their attendant Helots and the 700 Thespians he chose to await certain death The suspected Thebans also remained The devoted band, about 2500 in all, now advanced beyond the pass into the wider plain, where they would have room to fight, for there was no longer any question of holding the pass Xerxes did not attack at once, but gave time for the Immortals to get down the mountain side Then the order was given to advance But so great was the effect produced by the prowess of the Greeks that the barbarians had to be flogged on to the attack The Greeks did not wait, but made charge after charge with desperate valour into the heart of the swarming mass Thousands of the enemy were slain and thousands trampled under foot or pressed into the sea At last the spears of the Greeks were



all broken and they had to fight with their swords. Presently Leonidas fell, and over his body the struggle raged more furiously than ever. Two brothers of Xerxes were slain in the fight for the corpse, and it was only at the fourth charge that the Spartans recovered it. Then, hearing that the enemy were approaching from behind, the Thebans surrendered, but the survivors of the Spartans and the Thespians retired behind the wall to a hillock. There they made their last valiant stand, fighting to the end with broken swords, their fists, and their teeth, until the Persians no longer dared approach them and from a distance overwhelmed them with missiles.

Two Spartans were lying sick with ophthalmia in the camp at Alpeni behind. One, on hearing the news, armed himself, and, led by his Helot, charged amongst the enemy to die, the other, Aristodemus, returned to Sparta to find himself disgraced and shunned by all. Xerxes dishonoured himself by mutilating the corpse of Leonidas, contrary to Persian custom, the Spartan dead were honoured by a marble lion, placed on the mound where they fell, and the simple inscription composed by the poet Simonides —

“O stranger, to the Spartans go and tell  
Obedient to their orders here we fell!”

Such was the battle of Thermopylae. The Greeks were defeated, but only by treachery and the failure to send reinforcements, and they won undying glory. The Persians were victorious, but their victory was dearly bought and the spirit of their army was ruined.

**Battle of Artemisium, 480 B.C.** We must now consider what was happening meantime at Artemisium. The Greeks had been the first to arrive upon the scene. Soon the Persian fleet drew near and anchored off what was called the shore of Sepias, facing the island of Sciathos. So numerous were their ships that only some of them were

beached, the rest were anchored in eight lines. Next morning there arose from the north-east a heavy gale, which lasted for three days. A number of the ships were hauled ashore, but the storm caught the rest and dashed many of them to pieces on the rocky coast. Four hundred galleys and an unknown number of store vessels were thus lost. The survivors then took shelter at Aphetae inside the mouth of the gulf of Pagasae. The Greeks meanwhile had taken refuge from the storm on the inner side of Euboea. As they returned to Artemisium they captured a small Persian squadron which sailed unwittingly into their midst. But when they saw the Persian fleet with its numbers still far greater than they could count, the Peloponnesians wished to retire. Doubtless they knew that the attempt to hold Thermopylae was not meant seriously, and that, if they withdrew, the army also would withdraw. The Athenians, on the other hand, determined to stay. In order to defend Attica it was necessary that Thermopylae should be held. The Euboeans too, fearing for their own safety, begged Eurybiadas to stay, and, when they were unable to persuade him, turned to Themistocles with a bribe. Of this he gave part to Eurybiadas and part to the Corinthian admiral, while he pocketed the rest for himself. The bribe was effective and the fleet stayed.

The Persians now, seeing the position of the Greeks, hoped to trap them every one. Accordingly they despatched two hundred ships, with orders to keep out of sight, to round the south end of Euboea, and to close the straits. Next day the Greeks offered battle to those that stayed behind, and in the engagement that ensued they captured thirty ships. But darkness terminated an indecisive engagement. During the night a terrible thunderstorm occurred, with a violent wind which dashed to pieces the squadron of two hundred upon the cliffs of Euboea. In the morning the Greeks were encouraged by the arrival of the squadron of fifty-three Athenian ships from Chalcis, which brought the news of the destruction of the Persian vessels. They then resumed the fight and destroyed a number of the enemy. On the third day, the

disastrous day at Thermopylae, the Persians took the offensive with their whole force, trying to encircle the Greeks. We may suppose that Xerxes had ordered the action so that his fleet might break through and come to the help of his unsuccessful army. But their numbers proved their undoing, for the ships fouled one another, and again they had the worst of the fight.

**Retreat of the Greeks to Salamis** Yet the Greeks too had suffered severely, and the Athenians, who had especially distinguished themselves, found half of their ships were disabled. Themistocles was anxious to fight again, but, while they were in doubt, a boat came with news of the loss of Thermopylae. This decided the matter: if they did not retreat, the Persian army might seize and hold the narrow straits at Chalcis and they would be trapped. During the night the fleet withdrew, the Athenians guarding the rear. They then sailed right round Attica to Salamis, and helped the Athenians to transport their families and belongings to Salamis, Aegina, and Troezen on the shores of Argolis. They were now joined by various reinforcements which brought up the total of triremes to 378, though many of these were too much damaged to be brought into action again.

**Advance of Xerxes** Meantime Xerxes had marched through Phocis, ravaging the country as he went, under the direction of the Thessalians. But at their request the "mediating" towns of Boeotia were spared, only Thespieae and Plataea were burnt. An attempt was made upon Delphi. Marvellous stories were told of how the god defended his own. Amongst other things that drove back the barbarians was a fall of cliff which put the enemy to flight. At any rate Delphi with its treasures was left untouched. To the disgust of the Athenians no attempt was made by the Peloponnesians to defend the line of Cithaeron-Parnes, the next stand was to be made at the Isthmus, which was being strongly fortified. Demaratus advised Xerxes to send 300 ships to occupy the island of Cythera to the south of Laconia and thence threaten Sparta from the sea, that would bring the Spartans back home, and without them resistance would disappear. No

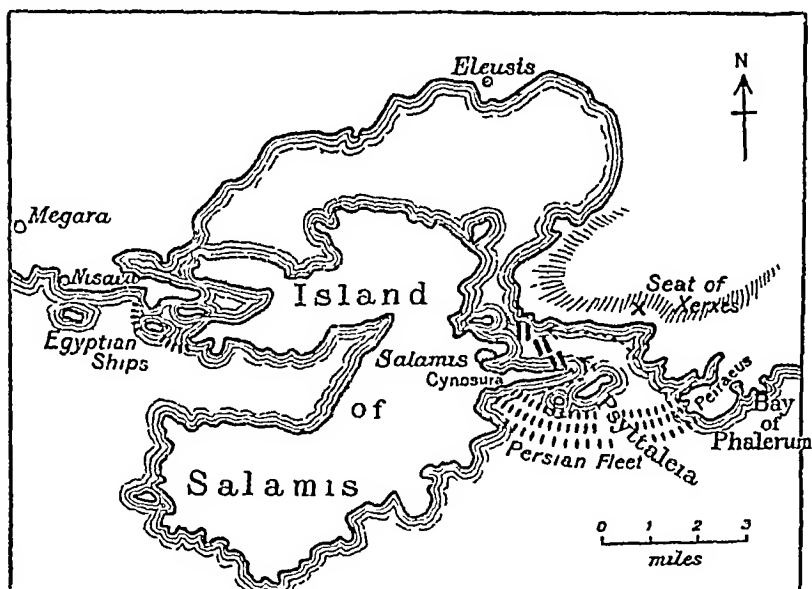




doubt Demaratus was right. But the Persian admiral Achaemenes, Xerxes' brother, refused to split the fleet, now weakened by the shipwrecks, lest the Greek ships should defeat the two parts in detail. The advice of the latter was taken, and the Persian vessels sailed round to Phalerum to meet the army, which entered Attica unopposed. Only a few inhabitants remained in Athens. Trusting in the Delphic oracle which asserted that "a wooden wall should be impregnable", and refusing to believe Themistocles' interpretation that this referred to ships, they fortified the Acropolis with a stockade. So strong was the position that for some days they held out, until the enemy scaled the precipitous cliff and opened the gates. The defenders were put to the sword, and the temples were burnt and levelled to the ground.

The Greek council of war. With Attica in the enemy's hands it seemed folly to the Peloponnesians to stay cooped up in the bay of Salamis, and most of the Greek commanders wished to retire to the Isthmus. There they might co-operate with the troops, with the possibility of escape to their cities in case of defeat. The question was long and stormily debated, and at nightfall it was determined to retire to Corinth and fight there. Then the council broke up. But a friend pointed out to Themistocles that, if the Greeks once retired, there would be no fighting at all, the fleet would break up, and not even Eurybiadas would be able to detain the craven-hearted. At once Themistocles sought another interview with the admiral and prevailed on him to open the question again. The junior admirals were summoned to the flagship, and Themistocles urged that with their few ships they would have a much better chance in a confined space than in the open sea where the enemy could use their numbers. Besides, a victory at Salamis would save the Athenian refugees in that island, save Megara and Aegina, and save the Peloponnese equally well. Why be so foolish as to lead the enemy as far as Corinth? The Corinthian Adeimantus angrily interrupted, bidding "a man who had no city be silent". Thereupon Themistocles' temper gave way, he plainly said what he thought of Adeimantus and

the Corinthians, he pointed out that while the Athenians had 200 ships they had a city, as any who proved hostile to them might learn to their cost. He finally played his trump card: the success of the war depended on the Athenian fleet, and, if the rest did not yield to his advice, the Athenians would take on board their wives and families and sail away to Italy, and there would then be occasion to remember his words. The council was deeply impressed, and Eurybiadas gave orders to remain at Salamis.



MAP 7 BATTLE OF SALAMIS 480 B.C.

**Xerxes' council** Next day Xerxes called a council of admirals to decide whether they should fight or not. Only Artemisia, the warlike queen of Halicarnassus, spoke against a battle. She pointed out that the Greeks had no provisions and in a few days would scatter, and a disaster to the Persian fleet would mean the ruin of the army. Xerxes applauded her words but agreed with the majority, thinking the fleet would fight well under his own royal eye.

**The trick of Themistocles** Meantime the old discussion was being re-opened among the Greeks. Themistocles,



The Peiraeus and Salamis

(The nearer harbour is Zea, the further the Peiraeus, the dark island is Psytaleia, beyond it rises Salamis)





fearing the result, had recourse to a crafty stratagem. He sent a message to Xerxes to say that he was really his friend, the Greek fleet was likely to break up and fly, the commanders were quarrelling among themselves and would not fight, the king must quickly block both entrances to the bay and he would have his enemy entrapped. Themistocles was safe either way. A battle was certain. If the Greeks won, the glory of the day would be his, if they lost, he now had a sure claim upon Xerxes' gratitude.

**Battle of Salamis, 480 B.C.** His advice was promptly taken. The Persians, when it was dark, sailed out and closed both entrances. The Egyptian squadron guarded the western strait by Megara, while the rest formed a triple line between the promontory of Cynosura in Salamis and the Peiraeus. They also landed a body of troops on the islet of Psyttaleia, in the middle of their line, in order to save their own men and kill the Greeks whom they expected to be wrecked upon it. The news of these doings was brought by Aristides. One of the last acts of the Athenians before leaving their city had been to recall all exiles. Aristides now crossed over from Aegina to place his services at the disposal of his ungrateful country and his personal enemy, he just succeeded in slipping through before the cordon of the Persians was complete. There was now no more occasion for talking, the Greeks set to work to make their preparations as the day dawned. Their ships were drawn up in lines abreast, with their bows pointing eastwards, the Athenians on the left facing the Phoenicians, the Lacedaemonians on the right opposite the Asiatic Greeks. Outside the straits the Persians had formed three lines, but as they advanced into the narrower waters they were thrown into confusion and "streamed", as Aeschylus says, round the promontory. Their left wing had difficulty in getting round and so was somewhat in the rear. The Greeks also advanced with loud shouts, their right wing leading, and were met with answering cheers from the enemy. Just before the fleets came in contact, the Greeks stopped and began to back water, but at the critical moment an Athenian

vessel shot out and rammed a Phoenician ship, while simultaneously an Aeginetan trireme on the right dashed forward. The rest came to their support and the fight became general. For hours the battle raged in this confined space. But their very numbers told against the Persians, they had no room to manoeuvre or avoid the enemy's rams. Drifting back wrecked, they then fouled their own ships astern, which were too eagerly pressing forward to the attack, because behind them, seated on a hill upon the Attic shore, was the king himself with a staff of secretaries busily taking notes how the various ships behaved. Thus the enemy's fleet fell into confusion and became an easy prey to the superior seamanship of the Greeks. The loss of life was great, for the Persians could not swim, while the Greeks, if their ships were wrecked, easily reached the shore. Among the incidents of the battle was the flight of Artemisia. Closely pursued by an Athenian trireme, she was flying, when a Persian vessel crossed her bows. Without a moment's hesitation she rammed and sank it and continued on her course. The Athenians, thinking from her action that she had deserted to their side, turned aside to attack others. Xerxes too observed the incident and, concluding that it was a Greek vessel that she had sunk, exclaimed, "My men have become women, and my women men." Soon the rout was general, and the survivors of the Persian fleet fled towards Phalerum and the protection of the troops. The Athenians followed in hot pursuit and did great damage among the flying foe, while the Aeginetans, either those from the right wing which had made its way out of the straits, or a reserve squadron from Aegina, took the enemy in the flank, ramming them amidships. Thus the Aeginetans gained the greatest renown in the fight, while the Athenians were placed second to them. Of individuals each commander voted for himself as having done most towards the victory, and considered Themistocles to be the next. Their testimony speaks for itself. At Sparta alone was he honoured as he deserved.

Retreat of the Persians. When the battle was over,

Aristeides took across a number of hoplites to the islet of Psyttaleia and put to the sword the helpless Persian troops, while the rest of the Greeks hauled the wrecks ashore and got ready to resume the battle. Xerxes, however, was seized with panic. He was afraid lest the Greeks should sail to the Hellespont and destroy his bridges. To arrest their departure he made a show of attacking Salamis by lashing together merchantmen as a causeway for his army to pass the straits. Meantime he took counsel with Mardonius. The latter was only too pleased to be rid of his unwarlike king and the unwieldy host, but he begged that he might be allowed to remain with 300,000 picked men to complete the subjugation of Greece. During the night the Persian ships set sail. When day came the Greeks gave chase and pursued them as far as Andros off the southern end of Euboea. But Eurybiadas and the Peloponnesian commanders, still fearful for the Isthmus, would go no further: by all means leave the bridges and let Xerxes and his host betake themselves from Europe, do nothing to cut off his retreat and make him stay. The Athenians were for bolder measures: cut the bridges and make the disaster complete, by themselves they would finish the business. But Themistocles, finding that he could not persuade the Peloponnesians, changed his plan and again determined to secure safety for himself should things still go wrong. He fell in with the counsel of the rest, and at the same time sent a message to the king that it was only his efforts that had been able to save the bridges and secure safety for the Persian retreat.

A few days later Xerxes left Attica. Mardonius picked as his fighting force the 300,000 whom he wanted, consisting mainly of Persians and Medes, and accompanied his master as far as Thessaly to winter there, since the season was too far advanced for a prolonged campaign against the Peloponnesians. The king pushed on with all haste, his army suffering terrible losses from disease, lack of food and water, and the early winter frosts. In six weeks he reached the Hellespont, to find the bridges gone, destroyed not by the Greeks but by a

storm Luckily the Persian ships were there to ferry him over Thence he continued his march to Sardis, where he could suppress any attempt at an Ionian revolt So ended his personal experience of Greece

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Where lay the weakness and advantages of (*a*) the Greeks, (*b*) the Persians?
- 4 Criticise the conduct of the Spartan government
- 5 Which state and which individual did most to save Greece?
- 6 What were the motives of Themistocles?

## CHAPTER XII

### PLATAEA

The Greeks still in danger With the departure of the Persians for the north all fear of immediate danger was removed The Greeks therefore dispersed to their own cities and laid up their ships for the winter Some of the Athenians returned at least to cultivate their ravaged fields But permanent rebuilding was not to be considered yet The danger was by no means at an end Mardonius was in Thessaly, firmly determined to renew his attempt in the coming year, while beyond him in Macedonia Artabazus, who had marched with 60,000 of the picked men to escort Xerxes to the Hellespont, had returned and was trying to reduce the towns of Chalcidice which showed symptoms of revolt

Intrigues of Mardonius The summer of 479 B C had well begun before Artabazus could bring his men, now only 40,000, back to Thessaly, and it was necessary to wait for the barley harvest in May in order to be sure of supplies

Mardonius meantime was not idle. Realising the truth of the information given so often by Greek exiles, he played upon the cupidity, fears, and jealousies of the Greeks. Large gifts of gold were sent to various states. Even in the Peloponnese Argos at least promised to prevent any Spartan advance. The northern and central Greeks were almost all with him. Could the Athenians be detached, all might yet be well. Accordingly he sent Alexander of Macedon to offer the Athenians generous terms. If only they would join Persia in equal alliance, the Great King would forget the past, Athens should be free and autonomous, with all her old territory and as much again, the Persians themselves would provide the money to rebuild the city and its temples. The offer was tempting. This Sparta realised, and hastily sent envoys to beg the Athenians to remain true to the cause of Hellas and put no faith in Persian promises, adding that she and her allies would support the homeless families while the war lasted. Thereupon the Athenians returned answer to Mardonius, "So long as the sun continues in his present course, we will never make terms with Xerxes." They thanked the Spartans and said that all they wanted was that the Peloponnesians should come out to fight in Boeotia.

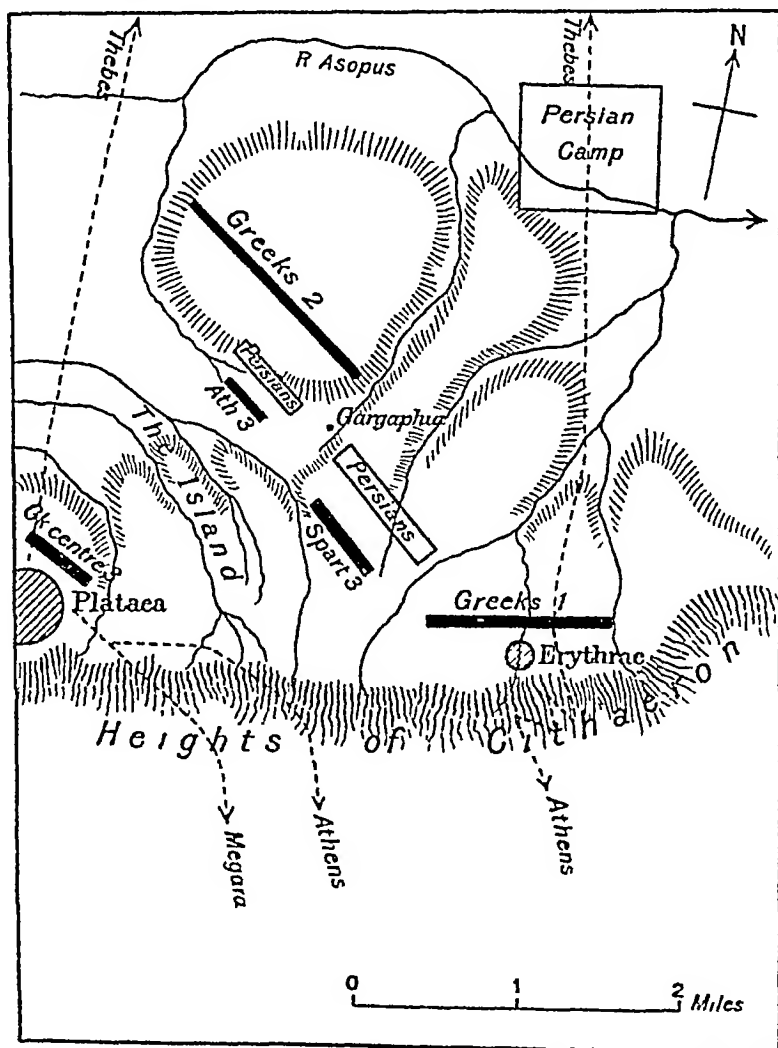
**Invasion of Mardonius.** When he received his answer, Mardonius at once set out for Attica with, it is said, 300,000 men and a large body of Greek allies. If we reduce the numbers by one-third, his force was still extremely formidable. On hearing the news the Peloponnesians hastily set to work to complete the Isthmus fortifications, but not one inch beyond them would they stir. A fleet too was gathered together, but much smaller than in the previous year. Leotychidas, one of the Spartan kings, was in command, while Xanthippus, the Alcmaeonid, led the Athenian contingent. Where was Themistocles? For some reason unknown to us the hero of Salamis was in disfavour, and, while Aristides and Xanthippus were among the generals, Themistocles held no post at all. Perhaps because of his absence, perhaps because it was a land-battle which the Athenians wanted to clear Greece

of the enemy, the Athenian contingent was small, and without them the fleet would not venture further east than Delos. The Persian fleet, much smaller too, had assembled at Samos but refused to cross the Aegean Sea. The naval forces therefore lay inactive. By land the Spartans perhaps would have redeemed their promise to the Athenians, but they feared the "medism" of Argos and of others if they left the Peloponnese, and there was ever present the chance of a Helot revolt. The other states, however, jealous of Athens and no longer needing her assistance as long as no Persian fleet was threatening them, selfishly stayed south of the Isthmus. Thus Mardonius advanced without meeting opposition. When he reached Boeotia, the Thebans urged him to halt there, employ gold, and await results. They knew their countrymen. Mardonius did indeed use Thebes as his base, and between it and the river Asopus to the south he established a fortified camp, but with a large part of his force he crossed Cithaeron and occupied Athens a second time.

Sparta stirred to action. The Athenians again retired to Salamis and sent envoys to Sparta to reproach the Lacedaemonians with their faithlessness and selfishness and to remind them of the Persian offers. On the old plea of keeping a religious festival the Spartans put off the giving of an answer. But when Chileus of Tegea pointed out the danger, namely that if the Athenian fleet went over to Persia the Isthmian wall would be useless, the ephors were at last alarmed. That night the regent Pausanias, the uncle of Leonidas' son, set out with 5000 Spartans, each accompanied by seven Helots. By their secrecy and sudden action and by adopting an unusual route they avoided any Argive opposition. Next day the Athenians were told that the army was already on its way, and 5000 Perioeci, each with his Helot, accompanied the envoys on their return. Thus 50,000 Lacedaemonians were on the march, and orders were given for all the Peloponnesian allies to join the army in full force.

Mardonius was surprised. Hastily he completed the destruction of the previous year in Athens and the district

round, then, throwing out some of his cavalry as far west as Megara to hold the advancing enemy in check, he withdrew his forces by the eastern passes into Boeotia and fell back upon his base. There his supplies were more secure, both



MAP 8 BATTLE OF PLATAEA 479 B.C.

food and water, and the ground was favourable for his cavalry.

**Battle of Plataea, 479 B.C.** Meantime the Peloponnesians had united at Corinth and marched forward some 100,000



strong At Eleusis they were joined by Aristides and 8000 Athenian hoplites who had crossed from Salamis Then they traversed Mt Cithaeron and took up a position on its northern slopes, eastward of Plataea, hard by the village of Erythrae The Lacedaemonians and the Tegeatans occupied the post of honour on the right, the other Peloponnesians held the centre, Megarians, Plataeans, Aeginetans, and Athenians made up the left wing Below them along the Asopus, a shallow but perennial stream, lay the Persian army in front of its camp, which bestrode the river and the road to Thebes Mardonius was in no hurry He was in his own chosen position The Greeks could not come into the plain without danger from his cavalry Every day increased their chance of quarrelling However, the cavalry might annoy those of the Greeks who were lower down Accordingly they advanced under their leader Masistius and harassed the Megarians, but when some Athenians moved down to help, the Persian leader was slain A furious fight ensued for the possession of the corpse, but at length the cavalry retired

Emboldened by this success and eager to press their advantage without delay, the Greeks now shifted their position north-westwards, probably with the intention of working round the Persian right and cutting the enemy off from the base at Thebes But the movement was never completed, and the army found itself further down in the plain, north-east of Plataea, occupying a ridge which sloped easily down to the Asopus The only advantage was a plentiful supply of water from a spring called Gargaphia For some days they held this position, but the Persians now occupied the pass which had been deserted, cut off a convoy of provisions, and resumed their cavalry attacks, till at length they succeeded in choking the spring on which the Greeks relied

With water and supplies thus interrupted, Pausanias was in an awkward case Finally he gave orders that the army should fall back by night to a spot called the Island, nearer to Plataea and further up the slope There the army would have water and immunity from the horsemen, while they

would again control the passes. But in the darkness the movement was a failure. One Spartan officer named Amompharetus refused to retreat, and Pausanias did not like to leave him. The Athenians too for some reason did not fall back. The centre retired too far, right upon Plataea. Thus, when the day dawned, the Greek army was utterly disorganised. Pausanias had begun to retire, and at length Amompharetus followed him, the Athenians too fell back. But the Persians now realised what was happening. Hastily Mardonius sent forward the cavalry to check the retreat of the Spartans, for the Athenians were hidden by a ridge, while he set the rest of his army in motion without waiting to arrange his line. Pausanias despatched a messenger to the isolated Athenians saying that he was going to fight and bidding them join him, and then he turned to face the foe. A short time he halted to obtain a favourable omen from sacrifice, while the advancing Persian infantry formed a barricade of shields and from behind them poured in a stream of arrows. Then he gave the word to charge, and down the hill rolled the heavy Lacedaemonian and Tegeatan line, 11,000 hoplites in full armour supported by 35,000 light-armed troops. For a while the flower of the Persian army fought manfully, but at close quarters they had no chance against the mailed Greeks. Onward swept the tide, driving before it the enemy in disorder upon their supports as they hurried from the camp. Presently Mardonius was slain, and the whole barbarian host broke up in confusion. Artabazus in the rear with 40,000 men at once fled northwards for the Hellespont, the rest rushed madly for their camp. Meanwhile the Greek allies of Persia had attacked the Athenians on the left. The Thebans especially fought stubbornly till the Persians were seen to be routed. Then they too fled for Thebes, the cavalry trying to cover the retreat. The Athenians pressed on and reached the Persian camp, at which the Spartans and Tegeatans had been checked. Soon, though too late for the main battle, the Peloponnesians of the centre arrived. The combined forces broke in and a horrible carnage

ensued, till the panic-stricken enemy were all but annihilated, and that at very small cost to the Greeks

The spoils When the work of slaughter was over, Pausanias bade the Helots collect the spoils The battle of Salamis had provided much plunder, which had been divided



FIG 1 BRONZE PILLAR AT DELPHI

Dedicated from the spoils of Plataea and inscribed with the names of those who fought there

among the victors after a due part had been set aside for the gods But the spoils of Plataea were immense Never had the Greeks seen such wealth of silver and gold, or had any conception of such Oriental luxury Three tenths were

set apart for the gods, for Apollo, for Zeus, and for Poseidon, and part of the trophy set up at Delphi, inscribed with the names of those who fought, may still be seen at Constantinople. The rest was divided among the conquerors, Pausanias receiving a greater portion than anyone else. The bravest of the Greeks upon that day was Aristodemus, the Spartan survivor of Thermopylae, who had fallen upon the field after performing prodigies of valour, but after his previous conduct the prize of bravery could not be awarded to him, it was given to others of the Spartan dead. Over the question who should erect a trophy, the Spartans and the Athenians nearly came to blows. The dispute was settled by awarding the prize of valour to the Plataeans and constituting them guardians of a festival to commemorate the deliverance of Greece.

**Punishment of traitors** One duty alone remained, that was the punishment of those who had helped the Medes. The worst offenders had been the Thebans. The army besieged the town and forced it to surrender. The leading oligarchs were taken to the Isthmus and summarily executed, and Thebes was deprived of the leadership of the Boeotian League. But inasmuch as the other states had been more or less forced to join the Great King, the idea of punishing them was wisely dropped, and with the departure of the Persians they again became free and independent.

**Effects of the battle** Thus was Hellas delivered from the barbarian. When Darius first threatened Greece it seemed impossible that a poor, tiny nation of perhaps two millions, divided in itself by petty jealousies, could withstand the hundreds of millions and the vast resources of an empire which stretched from Khartoum to the Aral Sea, from the Indus to the mouth of the Danube. Yet the impossible had happened. For the future there was no danger of a fresh invasion from the East. A hostile state of affairs continued for a hundred and fifty years. But Asia was the scene of the fighting, Asia was threatened by Europe, and at the end of the period a Greek king ruled in the Punjab and in Egypt.

## GREEK HISTORY FOR SCHOOLS

Causes of the Persian failure. Why was the Persian invasion repulsed? The causes are not far to seek. In the first place we must remember the vast distance from the Persian base, the necessity of a perfect combination of army and fleet, and the difficulty of keeping up lines of communication and procuring supplies, to say nothing of the natural facilities that Greece offers for defence. Secondly, there was the folly of Xerxes in gathering together a motley host for the purpose of display instead of considering military requirements. In such an armament there was no unity, cohesion, or discipline, in armour and weapons the Persians were far inferior to the Greeks, their numbers made the provision of proper supplies for a lengthy campaign impossible. The procession that under Xerxes' eye crossed the Hellespont would have been admirable to do empty honours at his funeral, for the conquest of Greece nothing more inefficient could have been devised. No officers, however capable, could have handled such a host. Nor was the attempt well made. Time after time the pride of the Persian leaders scorned the advice of their Greek allies and threw away opportunities. Finally, the spirit that urged on the vast majority of the king's army was that of slavery and the lash, the Greeks were animated by patriotism, however narrow, and their love of liberty.

The new Greece What were the results for Greece? In spite of all their selfish jealousies, yet in the common danger most of the states of Greece had at last pulled together, and a larger sense of patriotism, the spirit of Pan-Hellenism, had been roused, which, though weakened as the danger grew less, was never to be utterly lost again. Hitherto the Greeks had usually been known by the names of their various tribes and states, and foreigners by their several proper names. Henceforward, more and more, the name of Hellenes, originally that of the people of southern Thessaly, became the name of the race, while all others were grouped together as "Barbarians" because they said "Bar-bar-bar" or made some such unintelligible sounds. Socially, the external danger produced a great levelling of classes. It was not tyrants with

their mercenaries, it was not nobles with their cavalry, who had saved Greece, but it was the plain citizens, the hoplites, who had stood shoulder to shoulder and thrust back the foe. Every individual had played his part, for the future every individual must be considered in the state he had helped to save. Therefore after the Persian wars there was no more fear of tyranny, and oligarchy was a losing cause, victory remained with the democracy.

Which state could best take advantage of the new spirit?

Two above all others had distinguished themselves. Spartan valour had covered itself with glory at Thermopylae and crushed the enemy at Plataea, Athenian patriotism had saved Greece at Salamis. But the Spartans were fast bound in their cast-iron system, they could not develop or adapt themselves to circumstances, and so they were left behind. The Athenians, on the other hand, were nimble and quick and ever ready to improve the occasion. As a new England appeared in the days of Elizabeth after the defeat of Spain, so, in the revulsion of feeling which followed upon the Persian repulse, Athens was born again. The invasion had literally made a clean sweep of the city; she had to begin afresh. And so on the foundations already laid by Cleisthenes and Themistocles, the value of which the Persian danger had proved, the Athenians rebuilt their state, and reared an edifice of such imperial greatness and such artistic, literary, and intellectual beauty, that to the majority of men the history of Athens is the history of Greece.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Was Pausanias a great general?
4. Explain the various positions of the Greeks at Plataea
5. Under what circumstances does war do a country any good? What are the good results?
6. Why did the Persian expedition fail?
7. Read the account of the war in a translation of Herodotus or, still better, in the original Greek.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE GROWTH OF ATHENIAN POWER

**Battle of Mycale, 479 B.C.** On the same day as the battle of Plataea, or, more likely, a few days later, there was won by the Greeks at Mt Mycale near Miletus a victory which heralded the freedom of the Greek cities of Asia from the Persian yoke. We have seen that Xerxes himself was at Sardis watching the course of events, and a Persian fleet of 300 ships was gathered at Samos ready to crush any Ionian attempt at revolt. Meantime a Greek fleet of 180 vessels under Leotychidas, the Spartan king, with Xanthippus in command of the Athenian squadron, had advanced as far as Delos and released the Cyclades from fear of the barbarians. While Mardonius was occupying Athens for the second time, envoys came from Samos to Leotychidas representing that the appearance of the Greek fleet would be the signal for a general revolt, and induced him to cross the Aegean Sea. On hearing of the approach of the Greeks, the Persians hauled their ships ashore and erected a fortified camp. The Phoenician ships were not there, and in their absence the Persians dared not trust their fleet, largely manned by Asiatic Greeks, to meet the enemy. Leotychidas gave orders to land. The Athenians were the first on shore and at once engaged the enemy, who had drawn up outside the camp and offered a stubborn resistance. But a rumour ran through the Greek ranks that Pausanias had been victorious at Plataea. Encouraged by this and animated by the desire to win before the Spartans arrived, the Athenians made another charge. The Persian line was crumpled up and put to flight, and some of the Greeks entered the camp with the fugitives. At this moment the Lacedaemonians, who had been delayed by rough ground, came up, and the camp

was stormed. The Samians, suspected by the Persians and disarmed, did what they could to help their countrymen, and the Milesians, who for a similar reason had been posted on the hills outside the camp, joined in completing the destruction of the fugitives. Only a remnant escaped to Sardis and carried the news. Xerxes, on learning what had happened at Mycale and Plataea, gave up all hope of retaining his hold on the Greeks and returned to Susa.

**Stupidity of Sparta** Leotychidas, however, did not realise the complete collapse of Persian power. The narrow Peloponnesian view, which would not realise the importance of the sea, was not prepared to support another Ionian revolt. He proposed therefore to transport all who wished, and to provide them with homes elsewhere. The Ionians did not approve the plan and were backed by their Athenian kinsfolk. The scheme accordingly was dropped, but it was evident to the Asiatic Greeks that it was on Athens and not on Sparta that they must rely. Then the fleet sailed to the Hellespont to cut the bridges. It was only when it arrived that the Greeks found that they had been destroyed twelve months before. The Peloponnesians then sailed home. But it was the Athenians who remained to besiege and capture Sestos and to clear the passage of the Hellespont. Numerous other events and tendencies combined to leave Sparta some way behind in the race with Athens, and it will be well to follow the fortunes of Sparta exclusively for the next fifteen years, in order to show how the way was gradually being left clear for Athens.

**Conduct of Pausanias** It was Pausanias who was to do most to bring discredit on Sparta and play into Athenian hands. His head was completely turned by his success and the sight of Persian luxury which he had seen at Plataea. Next year he commanded a Greek force which sailed to Cyprus and freed that island. Then he went to Byzantium and expelled the Persian garrison. There he lingered, setting up trophies in his own honour, behaving as a tyrant, adopting Persian manners and dress, and intriguing with the Persian court. It was said that he even offered to marry the daughter



of Xerxes and enslave not only his own city but all Greece. The allies refused to obey him, and placed themselves under the orders of the Athenians, Aristides and Cimon, son of Miltiades. The ephors, hearing of his doings, recalled him and put him on his trial. He was acquitted indeed of "medism", for the charge was hard to prove, but he was deprived of his command. Yet his vanity and ambition had not received a lesson sharp enough. He set out for Byzantium on his own account, and by his wealth and influence established himself in the city. He then captured Sestos and made himself master of the Hellespont as well as of the Bosphorus.

This was intolerable to the Athenians, who were beginning to be dependent on the Euxine for their corn-supplies. They sent a squadron under Cimon, which expelled Pausanias from both cities, and, when his intrigues with Persia grew more open, the ephors again summoned him home to take his trial. This he was ready to face, relying upon bribery, but his accuser dared not appear. However, all men shunned and suspected him. In his mad rage he now set to work to stir up a Helot revolt. But a compromising letter to Persia was intercepted by the ephors, and his arrest was ordered. He fled for sanctuary to a building which adjoined the temple of Athene, the ephors walled up the doorway and starved him to death.

**Conduct of Leotychidas** Discredit was brought upon Sparta by the conduct of Leotychidas also. He was sent to Thessaly by sea, under the pretext of punishing the Aleuadae of Larissa for their "medism", but with the intention of absorbing Thessaly in the Peloponnesian league. A large bribe, however, a thing that few Spartans brought up under the strict training of Lycurgus could resist, induced him to depart. His offence was flagrant, and he was condemned to death, but he escaped by flying to sanctuary at Tegea.

**Spartan troubles in the Peloponnese** The Arcadian states now combined against Sparta and gained the support of Argos, which had recovered from the slaughter inflicted by

Cleomenes before the Persian wars The hostilities were not important, Sparta held her own, but the combination against her, together with the Helot danger, effectually prevented interference with Athenian progress

Finally, in 464 B C a terrible disaster happened A fearful earthquake caused great loss of life and laid Sparta in ruins Amidst the confusion the Helots rose in revolt In Laconia they were soon reduced, but in Messenia they fortified Mt Ithome and held out So humbled were the Spartans that they begged for Athenian help This was foolishly granted them at the urging of Cimon, who, like his father Miltiades, was the friend of Sparta But when the Athenian force was unsuccessful the Spartans dismissed it curtly without a word of thanks For ten years the Messenians held out, and surrendered only on condition of being allowed to depart Athens was by that time at war with Sparta, and took the grateful exiles to the Corinthian Gulf, where at Naupactus, in the narrowest part, they founded a settlement which was to be equally useful to their protectors and annoying to their foes

Rebuilding of Athens, 478 B C We must now go back to the Athenians When the remnant of the Persian host had fled from Greece, the Athenians began to return to their city and rebuild their ruined homes By the spring of 478 B C the majority had come back, and the work of reconstruction was undertaken in earnest The Persian destruction had been so complete that there was no need to repair the damage on the lines of the old town A more magnificent city on a far larger scale was planned, such as would be worthy of the imperial state that was to be

Themistocles and the walls Had Themistocles had his way, the new city would have been at the Peiraeus, for between the capital and the port lay nearly five miles of open country, exposed to the attack of any foe who wished to cut off the town from the sea, which was to be its destiny and its support. But sentiment was too strong, and Athens was rebuilt on the old site This much, however, Themistocles did succeed in doing Foreseeing the hostility which his plans of Athenian

greatness were sure to arouse, he persuaded the people to leave the reconstruction of their own houses, the temples, and public buildings, and devote all their efforts to the building of a wall. The scale on which the work was started soon aroused the jealousy of neighbouring states. Aegina and others privately informed Sparta and begged her to interrupt the work. But the Athenians had a right to do as they pleased, and all that the ephors could do was to send envoys to suggest that Sparta did very well without a wall and that a fortified Athens might provide a dangerous base if it should fall into Persian hands again.

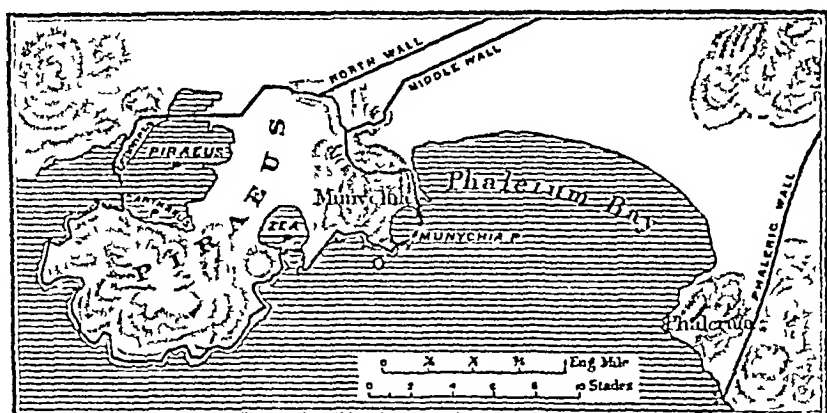
The excuse was too transparent. This was the moment for Themistocles to use his wits. By his own advice he and two colleagues, of whom Aristides was one, were sent to Sparta to discuss the matter. He himself started at once, but Aristides was not to come until the walls were high enough to form a defence. Meanwhile every man, woman, and child was pressed into the work, which went on night and day. Even at this moment parts of the wall are standing, which show how in their feverish haste the Athenians used anything that lay at hand, even the ruined columns of the temples, stones from off the graves, and the material of the houses they had just put up. Unwittingly the Persians had saved the Athenians the need of quarrying. For weeks Themistocles waited at Sparta for his colleagues, professing himself unable to understand their delay, and fresh stories came of the pace at which the walls were growing. He characterised these as idle tales and bade the Spartans send for themselves and see. At the same time he sent a message home to detain the envoys as a security for the safety of himself and his colleagues. The latter had now arrived with news that the wall was high enough. At once Themistocles threw off the mask, and plainly told the Spartans that the city was already walled and capable of managing its own affairs without its neighbours' advice. The Spartans could not say or do anything, but they realised that Themistocles was their enemy.



Themistocles



The Peiraeus. No sooner were the walls of the city built than the people turned their attention to the Peiraeus. There the fortifications were even stronger, a wall fourteen feet in width and sixty in height being built of solid, squared stone all the way round the Peiraeus itself and the smaller harbours of Zea and Munychia, while the entrances were protected by moles. Themistocles' idea was that this should be the last defence of the Athenians if they were hard pressed, and that the walls should be capable of defence by old men and boys, while the able bodied manned the fleet. Arrangements too were made by which the strength of the fleet was kept up,



MAP 9 THE HARBOURS OF ATHENS

and a maritime population was ensured by the attraction of industries and trade and by the encouragement of foreigners in the Peiraeus.

Themistocles the foe of Sparta. Themistocles' bold anti-Spartan policy was also apparent in the way in which he thwarted the Spartan design of excluding Argos, Thebes, and Thessaly from the Amphictyonic Council as a punishment for their "medism". On another occasion he came forward with a secret plan to ensure Athenian supremacy. The assembly bade him ask Aristides, if he approved, the plan should be carried out. It was no less than to burn the Peloponnesian fleet of Leotychidas while it lay at anchor. Aristides

informed the assembly that the plan would be effective but would involve gross treachery. It was therefore dropped.

**Ostracism of Themistocles** But Themistocles was never popular and never inspired trust among the Athenians. A demagogue he was, but the honest Aristides was the man whom the people trusted, as the last story shows. Xanthippus and the Alcmaeonids hated him, and the philo-Spartan party under Cimon likewise opposed his policy. He had been responsible for too many shady transactions, his manners were arrogant and vainglorious, his corruption and the ill means by which he got his wealth were well-known. Thus his enemies were too many for him, and in 472 B.C. he was ostracised, and retired to Argos to stir up the Argives and Arcadians against Sparta.

**His condemnation and death** To get rid of him the ephors informed the Athenians that he had shared in Pausanias' intrigues. It is likely that he was a party to the Helot plot, that he was guilty of "medism" is most improbable. When the Athenian officers came to arrest him, he fled to Corcyra and thence to Epirus. There Admetus, king of the Molossi, gave him protection, and, when his pursuers retired discomfited, sent him overland to Macedonia, whence, after narrowly escaping an Athenian squadron, he reached Ionia. In his absence he was condemned to death as a traitor and his property confiscated. For some time he lay hid in Ionia, till Xerxes was dead. Then he appealed to the new king, Artaxerxes, saying that he was the man who had done most harm to the Persians, but that he had saved the Hellespontine bridge and might do good to them again. He was welcomed at the Persian court and made governor of Magnesia on the Maeander, but he does not seem to have really entertained any serious ideas of helping the Persians against his countrymen. There he lived for some years and, in all probability, died a natural death. "Such," says Thucydides, "was the end of Pausanias the Lacedaemonian and Themistocles the Athenian, who had been the most distinguished of all the Greeks in their day."

Aristeides founds the Confederacy of Delos. We must now return to the Athenians in the Aegean Sea. After the disgrace of Pausanias, Cimon and Aristeides at the wish of the allies were left at the head of the Athenian and Ionian fleet. In order to prosecute the war against Persia a definite confederacy was formed under the leadership of Athens. The league included most of the islands of the Aegean and most of the cities of the western shore of Asia Minor. Some Thracian towns too joined, and almost all of Euboea. The centre and treasury was the temple of Apollo in the sacred isle of Delos. The states bound themselves together against Persia and undertook not to withdraw without the consent of the whole body. Such was the esteem in which Aristeides was held that he was called upon to assess the contribution of each state. The total value of the contributions amounted to 460 talents<sup>1</sup> annually. This could be paid either in ships and men or in money, but most of the cities preferred to pay their share in cash. Besides that, all had to contribute soldiers for the expeditions. The council met in Delos, each city sending one representative and having one vote, but Athens was the leader and carried out the decrees of the council, while Athenian officers collected the contributions, and the "Hellenotamiae", or treasurers, were Athenian citizens. This Confederacy of Delos was to become the naval empire of Athens.

Cimon leader of the Confederates. The first achievements of the league were made in Thrace. Cimon led the fleet against Eion, the Persian stronghold at the mouth of the Strymon, and at length captured it. An ineffectual attempt was made to colonise it from Athens. We know little of how the rest of the work was done, but in the course of a few years the Persian garrisons were entirely expelled from Europe, and few of the Aeolian, Ionian, and Hellespontine towns or of the Aegean islands had failed to enter the Confederacy. Amongst other captures was the pirate island of Scyros, whence the reputed bones of Theseus were brought to Athens and buried in a temple which was built in his

<sup>1</sup> £110,400



honour To this island, too, Athenian colonists were sent Carystus, the only town in Euboea which had not joined the league, was then attacked and forced to become a member

**Battles of the Eurymedon, 466 B C** In 466 B C Xerxes made a last attempt to equip an armament against the Greeks Army and ships were to meet at the mouth of the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia Cimon, who was in the southern Aegean winning the towns of Caria and Lycia, promptly sailed for the spot He found the enemy's ships close in to the shore, under the protection of the army, waiting for a Phoenician squadron At once he attacked, captured, and destroyed the ships Then he landed his men, took the Persian camp, and put the army to flight Finally, he embarked, stood out to sea, and annihilated the Phoenician reinforcements Three victories in one day! For the moment the reputation of Athens and her commander stood above reproach If the Athenians had been high-handed in appropriating Eion and Scyros and forcing Carystus, at least they had proved worthy of their leadership

**The Confederacy becomes an Athenian empire** But Persian power was shattered, there was no more work for the league to do The members grew slack, military service was irksome, it was easier to contribute money than ships, and many had adopted this course Soon they realised that the money went to build Athenian ships, the allied fleet was an Athenian fleet supported by the tribute of her allies Naxos was the first to break away But she had no right to do so till the Confederacy was dissolved, and Athens had no intention of allowing a dissolution Naxos was attacked and reduced to the position of a subject and tributary ally—of Athens The turn of Thasos came next That island off the mouth of the Strymon was famous for its silver It held a strip of Thracian coast also and tried to develop the gold mines of Mt Pangaeus The attempts of Athens to secure a footing at the river mouth were dangerous to its trade So it too revolted from the league It endeavoured to get Spartan help, but

Sparta was involved with her Helots Cimon laid siege to the town and after a long blockade captured it The ships were given up, the walls pulled down, the mainland surrendered, and Thasos was the subject of Athens Thus the league was rapidly becoming an Athenian empire A few states still contributed ships and were independent, the majority contributed money to the Athenian fleet and were independent only in name, an increasing number were tributary states with their government determined by Athens and supported by an Athenian garrison

**Ostracism of Cimon, 461 B.C.** After the battles of the Eurymedon, Cimon was undoubtedly the foremost figure at Athens Themistocles was in exile and disgrace Xanthippus was dead Aristeides also, loved, honoured, and revered by all alike, had passed away—"the best and most just of Athenians", as Herodotus observes Cimon's open-handed generosity, his lavish hospitality, and his simple kindness rendered him popular, and his anti-Persian military and naval career set the crown upon his success Yet with one thing the people would never agree that was his admiration and friendship for Sparta No doubt his influence, working against that of Themistocles, prevented the open breach between Spartans and Athenians which would otherwise have occurred Yet when he took help to the Spartans at Ithome he was undoubtedly wrong from a statesman's point of view, and that mistake proved his own undoing His expedition had been bitterly opposed by the new popular leaders, Ephialtes and Pericles, son of Xanthippus The failure of his troops and their insulting dismissal by the Spartans justified the opposition While he was absent, Ephialtes carried a law which deprived the Areopagus of all its censorial powers and left it merely a court of homicide Since the Persian wars the Areopagus had had great influence owing to the patriotism it had then displayed, and its influence was strongly on the side of peace with Sparta and all neighbouring states, and opposed to the aggressive schemes of the democrats When Cimon arrived home he attempted to repeal the law, and party feeling

ran high Ostracism was demanded, and Cimon was forced to retire In their wrath his partisans assassinated Ephialtes, and Pericles was left the prominent man in Athens

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 With what statesmen of other countries can you compare Themistocles?
- 4 How did Sparta miss her opportunities?
- 5 Account for the popularity of Athens
- 6 Were the Athenians justified in looking back to the years that followed Marathon as a Golden Age?

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE UNDER PERICLES

**Pericles** The new statesman belonged to the Alcmaeonidae, for his father Xanthippus had married into that family and become one of the faction But Pericles was not the head of a faction or a family, he was the leader of the Athenian people, and for more than thirty years, with only an occasional break of unpopularity, he advised and guided the state He was not a typical popular leader he had none of the brilliant and showy qualities of Themistocles, he had not the affability with which Cimon won the people's hearts, he was haughty, passionless, and reserved, living a secluded life and rarely appearing in public In face and bearing he resembled the statues of Zeus, and his grave and majestic manner and the dignified utterances of his oratory carried weight in the assembly as if the king of the gods had given his decision His foreign policy was purely Athenian and anti-Spartan, his domestic schemes were concerned with the education and exaltation of the democracy



Pericles



Comparison of Athenian and British empires It is well for us citizens of the British empire to pause and consider in some detail whether the guidance of Pericles was wise Athens was an imperial state, her greatness was based upon her commerce and her naval power; her government was the purest and most complete form of democracy that history can present It is true that comparisons are often misleading and dangerous, resemblances are sometimes superficial, and account must be taken of the differences which are less easily seen Yet the problems which confronted the Athenians of twenty-five centuries ago are extraordinarily like those which face us to-day

Foreign policy of aggression First we must deal with external affairs Frankly adopting the plans of Themistocles, the Athenians at Pericles' advice concluded alliances with Thessaly and Argos, both of which states were hostile to Sparta In Boeotia help was given to the democrats, and the hostility of the ruling oligarchs was thereby secured Megara was getting the worst of a struggle with Corinth, and joined the Athenian alliance The Athenians built walls from Megara to the sea and placed a garrison of their own within A squadron was sent into the Corinthian Gulf and occupied Naupactus at the narrowest part, thus threatening the western Corinthian trade Even this activity was not enough Inarus, a Libyan chieftain in the Delta of the Nile, was leading an Egyptian revolt from Persia In order to secure a commercial opening in that quarter, a fleet of 200 ships, engaged in Cyprus, was despatched to assist the rebels, and sailed up the river as far as Memphis (near Cairo) Taking advantage of its absence, the Corinthians made an alliance with Aegina and Epidaurus and declared open war, 458 B.C. Sparta, engaged with the Helots, fortunately for Athens, could not assist But the danger was great.

The Long Walls To guard against risks the Athenians set about building "Long Walls" to connect their city with the sea One of these ran from Athens to the Peiraeus, the other to the Phaleric Bay Some years later as an additional

safeguard a third wall was built between the two, parallel to the northern wall. Thus Athens and the Peiraeus were made one, with communication secure.

**War** While the building of the walls was in progress, carried on largely, no doubt, by slaves, the Athenians and their allies sailed against the enemy. A descent upon the Epidaurian coast and a stubborn battle at sea produced no decisive result. But in another fight off Aegina no less than seventy Corinthian and Aeginetan prizes were taken, and the Athenians followed up their victory by landing in Aegina all their available force. The Corinthians tried to draw off the enemy by attacking Megara. Without recalling a man from Aegina, Myronides at the head of an army of old men and boys marched to relieve the place. A drawn battle followed, but the Corinthians retired and left the Athenians to erect a trophy. Stung by the taunts of their countrymen, the Corinthians returned, only to be decisively beaten by the Megarians and Athenians. Meanwhile, we must remember, half of the Athenian force was in Egypt. A monument to the dead of one of the tribes records that in one year Athenian soldiers had died in Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt, Argolis, Aegina, and Megara. Such was the activity of Athens.

**Fall of Aegina** The blockade of Aegina went on, and less than two years later the island was starved into surrender. The warships were handed over to the victors, the walls were pulled down, and Aegina as a tributary state entered the Athenian alliance.

**War with Sparta** Tanagra, 457 B.C. Meanwhile another petty war had broken out, between the Phocians and the little state of Doris. Thereupon the Spartans despatched a Peloponnesian force to the help of their Dorian motherland. They crossed the Corinthian Gulf to Boeotia, routed the Phocians, freed Doris, and were returning home by land, for an Athenian squadron was patrolling the Gulf. But at Tanagra they were waylaid by the Athenians and their allies, who viewed with suspicion the presence in Central Greece of a Peloponnesian force which might strengthen the oligarchs.

of Boeotia. It was whispered in Athens that Cimon's party had invited the Lacedaemonians to march on Attica. Whatever truth there was in the rumour, it is certain that Cimon appeared in the Athenian camp and begged to be allowed to fight for his country. His request was not granted, but his partisans sacrificed themselves so valiantly in the fight that, at the instance of Pericles, Cimon was recalled from banishment. The battle was bloody and hard-fought, but during the engagement the Thessalians deserted the Athenians and went over to the enemy. The Athenians were then forced to retire, but the Lacedaemonians dared do no more than go home, ravaging Megarian territory as they went.

**War with Thebes Oenophyta** Two months later, during the winter, Myronides unexpectedly crossed into Boeotia and beat the Thebans and the oligarchs at Oenophyta. The democrats in every town were ready to open the gates. The Boeotian League was broken up, and the towns, now independent, entered the Athenian alliance. At the same time the Phocians also joined it, and the Athenians reached Thermopylae and sent an expedition to Thessaly.

**Raids on the Peloponnese** Even the Peloponnesian coast did not escape. Troezen fell into Athenian hands, and Gytheium, the naval arsenal of Sparta, was sacked and burned by Tolmides. He then sailed round to Messenia, took on board the Helots from Ithome, planted them at Naupactus, and dominated the Corinthian Gulf, using as a base the Megarian port of Pegae. The next year Pericles himself was in the Gulf, defeating the Sicyonians, bringing the cities of Achaëa into the alliance, and attacking Acarnania. This marks the highest point of Athenian prosperity.

**Disaster in Egypt, 454 B.C.** But a disaster in Egypt brought these brilliant exploits to a close. The Athenian expedition for a while had been successful. At length Persian reinforcements arrived, defeated Inarus and the allies, drove them out of Memphis, and shut them up in an island of the



Nile There they held out for eighteen months, till a canal was dug, the water drained off, and the Persians stormed the position The Greeks burned their stranded ships, and the remnant were allowed to march to Cyrene, and so reached their homes The disaster was completed by the loss of a squadron of 50 ships, which landed at the mouth of the Nile without knowing what had happened There they were attacked by the Persians on shore and by the Phoenician fleet from behind Few escaped to tell the tale

Death of Cimon and peace with Persia, 449 B C Athens could no longer stand the strain, a breathing space was necessary, and, though Corinth refused to allow a definite treaty which would sanction her loss and Athens' gain, yet Cimon's influence succeeded in bringing about a five years' truce, 451 B C Thus freed at home, the Athenians could think of vengeance for the Egyptian disaster Cimon wisely refrained from interfering in politics, and welcomed the opportunity of work away from Athens Accordingly he set sail with 200 ships for Cyprus, over which Artaxerxes was trying to recover his authority Cimon himself fell sick and died whilst besieging Citium, but the expedition won a double victory, by land and sea, near the Cyprian town of Salamis The armament, having lost its leader, then sailed home Soon afterwards an arrangement was reached between Athens and Persia, by which hostilities ceased No definite treaty was signed, but the Greeks on the one side agreed to make no further attacks, while the Persians on the other made no attempt to recover what they had lost

Revolt of Boeotia and Phocis, 447 B C Then in a few years the Athenians lost their empire by land as rapidly as they had won it The first to go was Boeotia The exiled oligarchs returned and seized Orchomenus, Chaeroneia, and other towns Tolmides, with 1000 Athenian hoplites and some allied contingents, marched on Chaeroneia and took it Then, leaving a garrison behind, he retired But as he was marching past Coroneia he was attacked and slain Many of his men were made prisoners, and the Athenians were

permitted to recover them only on condition that they evacuated the country and left it independent Phocis too threw off her allegiance The infection rapidly spread

Revolt of Euboea and Megara, 446 B.C. Next year the Euboeans revolted Pericles himself took the command But as soon as he reached the island he was recalled by the news that the Megarians had treacherously slain the Athenian garrison and joined the revolt, only their ports of Nisaea and Pegae remained to Athens Worse still, the five years of truce were over and a Peloponnesian force was marching upon Attica under Pleistoanax, the young Spartan king But the invaders never advanced further than Eleusis A Spartan was so strictly brought up not to use money that the sight of it was a delightful sensation, it suddenly became evident to Pleistoanax that with Pericles' unexpected return there was no hope of surprising the Long Walls, and so the expedition retired Pericles then passed over again to Euboea and reduced the island Most of the towns were re-admitted as allies, but the inhabitants of Histiaea were expelled, and Athenian "cleruchs", or colonists, were sent to take their place

The Thirty Years' Peace, 445 B.C. Yet, in spite of this success, so dangerous was the situation that Pericles opened negotiations for peace Callias headed an embassy to Sparta, and presently terms were arranged Athens gave up Troezen, Achaëa, and the ports of Megara, and recognised Spartan hegemony on land, Sparta promised not to touch the Confederacy of Delos and Athenian naval supremacy, the peace was to last for thirty years The loss of Boeotia was merely a loss of prestige, the revolt of Megara was a far more serious matter Not only was Athens deprived of her base which controlled the Corinthian Gulf, but the Peloponnesian league could pass the Isthmus when they chose and had an outpost at her very doors

Development of Athenian naval power (a) The tribute Resigning himself to the inevitable, Pericles now devoted his efforts to the strengthening of Athenian naval and

commercial supremacy Probably in the year 454 B.C., on the excuse of Persian activity, the treasury of the Confederacy had been removed from Delos to Athens With the accession of fresh cities to the league the amount of the tribute had risen to 600 talents<sup>1</sup> a year, which came into Athenian hands Only three states, the islands of Chios, Lesbos, and Samos, contributed ships, the rest, two hundred and forty-six in number, paid tribute, and for greater convenience of collection were grouped in five districts Every four years a new assessment<sup>2</sup> was made No complaint was raised of unfairness or heavy taxation, the opposition was to taxation at all There was no longer danger from Persia, at any rate after Cimon's death in Cyprus Some of the money was spent upon an Athenian fleet, which constantly cruised in the Aegean to prevent, not a Persian attack, but a revolt of the members of the league, much larger sums were spent in Athens upon purely Athenian objects, while a huge surplus of nearly 10,000 talents<sup>3</sup> had accumulated in the treasury in the Acropolis

(b) The "cleruchies" Another cause of annoyance to the allies was the Periclean system of "cleruchies" The project of providing for the poorer population of Athens and ensuring an Athenian garrison in other lands was no new one We have seen it at Chalcis and in other cases But under Pericles it became the regular practice His first great settlement was at Histiaea Another was made in the Thracian Chersonese in order to secure the Athenian corn-supply through the Hellespont As opportunity offered, further garrisons were planted in various places The system was excellent for Athens, it was most galling to the allies, and, had it not been for a friendly democratic party in every state, revolts would have been far more frequent Colonists too were sent out In Italy Sybaris was refounded under the

<sup>1</sup> £144,000

<sup>2</sup> Some of the original tribute-lists, engraved on marble, are still in existence

<sup>3</sup> £2,400,000



An Athenian Vase



name of Thurii, to be a centre of Athenian trade and influence in the West. In Thrace too another, and this time successful, attempt was made at the mouth of the Strymon. Amphipolis was planted to draw the trade of that populous region and of the Danube, to secure a hold upon the mines of Mt Pangaeus, and to guard the bridge between Macedonia and Thrace. Even where neither colony nor cleruchy existed, friendly relations were cultivated, Pericles himself sailed into the Black Sea to make arrangements with the far distant towns of South Russia for the supply of grain.

(c) *Revolt of Samos.* The imperial nature of the Athenian leadership was also shown in the fate of Samos. In 440 B.C. Samos and Miletus quarrelled about a piece of land. The Athenians were asked to arbitrate, and assigned the land to Miletus. But the Samian oligarchy refused to abide by the award. Pericles led 40 ships across the Aegean to enforce Athenian authority. He put down the oligarchs and set up democracy. No sooner was his back turned than the oligarchs regained their power, declared war on Athens, and revolted from the Confederacy. Promptly he came back, and with a much larger force blockaded the island. For a time the Samians were successful, broke the blockade, and tried to draw Sparta into their quarrel. But the Athenians were soon reinforced, and the blockade was resumed. After a stubborn resistance of nine months the islanders were forced to submit, their walls were razed, their warships taken away, and a heavy fine was inflicted. Such was the fate of those who defied the mistress of the league.

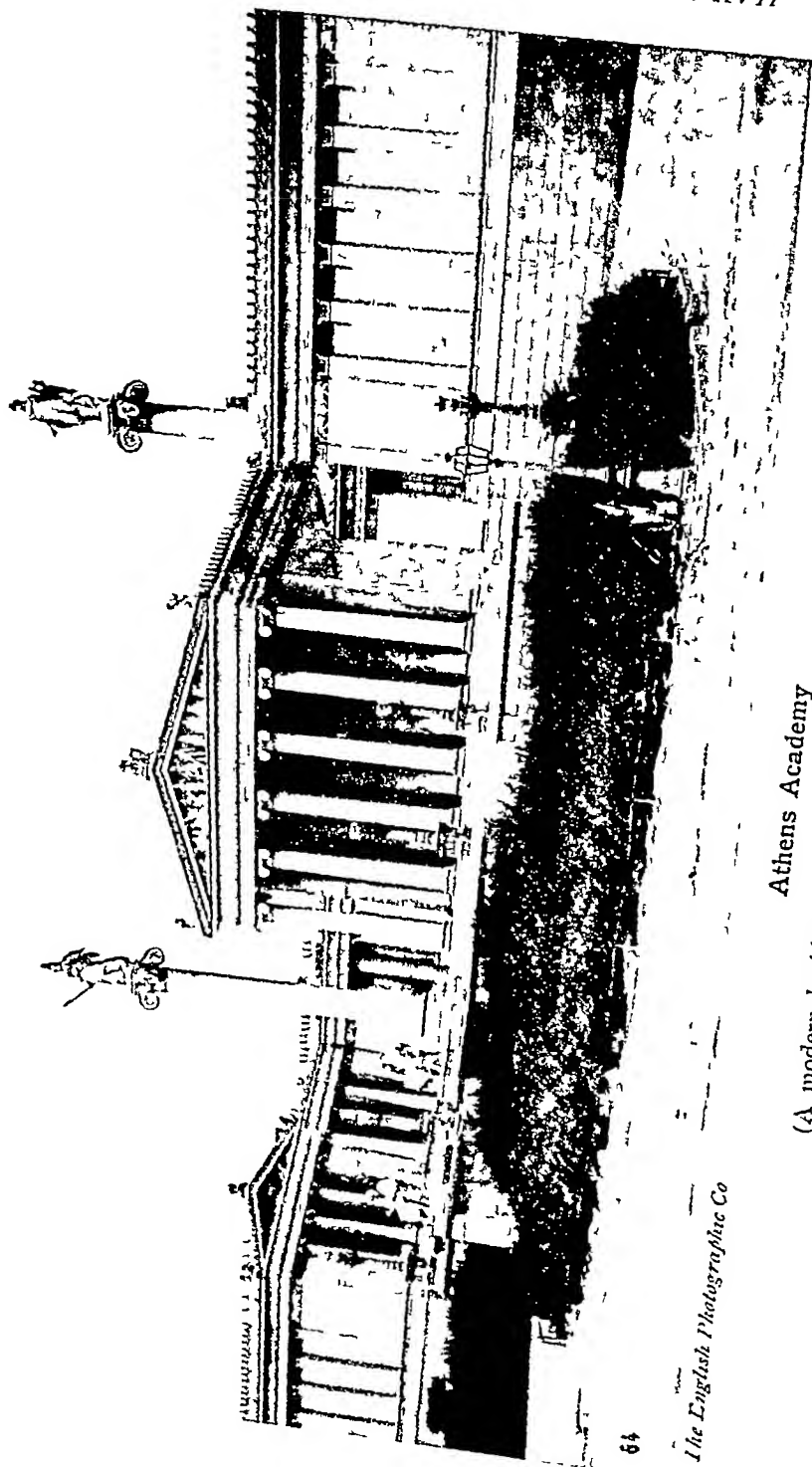
*Domestic policy* (a) *Payment for public service.* Now let us turn to Pericles' policy at home. We have already seen how his imperial system of settlements was made to fit in with the advantage of the poorer citizens. Provision for the people was also connected with political schemes in Athens. The people were to serve the state, and they were to be paid for their services. Payment in the fleet must have become usual at Athens when, after Salamis, the fleet was kept constantly at sea, but it was Pericles who first made it a

regular public charge. Soldiers too were paid when engaged on foreign service. A far more important institution was the payment of the *jurors* in the law courts. The fee was not as high as the wages of an artisan, but it was enough to live upon. Hence the courts were open to the lowest of the citizens. Six thousand men were thus supported, and became a power in the land. It was inevitable that the example should be followed by later democrats, and about fifty years afterwards pay was introduced for attendance in the *Ecclesia* too.

At the same time, in order to bring work, and therefore power, to these citizens, a blow was dealt at the dignity of the magistrates. Ephialtes had transferred the power of the *Areopagus* partly to the assembly, partly to the courts. Pericles now went further: the archonship soon after Marathon had been decided by lot from among a select number, it was now opened to all the classes. The same applied to the council too. Since even the poorest were eligible, a necessary corollary was that archons and councillors should be paid. Thus all men were levelled politically, and the democracy was complete. Theoretically at Athens everyone should have been a statesman and everyone a lawyer, educated perforce to a high level of intelligence. While Pericles was alive the assembly followed his lead and no great harm was done. After his death the result was wild confusion.

(b) *Doles*. Much criticism was directed against Pericles for encouraging the Athenians to undertake for pay what ought to have been the duties and burdens of citizenship. There was, however, something to be said to justify his plan. But such was not the case with his policy of granting *doles* to the poorer citizens from the public funds, in order that they might attend public festivals and feast at the public expense. This system was bound to demoralise the multitude. It was bad that they could grant things to themselves, it was still worse that any demagogue could make himself popular by proposing such grants.

(c) *Public buildings*. But a far greater drain upon the



Athens Academy

(A modern building correctly designed in the Ionic style)

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public funds was the scheme of magnificent buildings which Pericles carried out. Cimon had inaugurated a period of building on a lavish scale after the Persian wars, yet the glories of Periclean art, not only in Athens but throughout Attica, were to eclipse all Cimon's conceptions and to associate the name of Athens with the masterpieces of the world.

**Sources of revenue.** Whence did the money come? Taxation in Athens was light, a property tax was imposed only in time of war, and from this the poorer classes were exempt, it was the rich who undertook in turn the "liturgies", the duties of equipping a trireme for a year, of staging a play at the dramatic contests, of providing for an embassy or a festival. The state mines at Laurium supplied a large sum indeed. But the real source of revenue was the tribute of the Confederacy. None of Pericles' acts was so bitterly assailed as his expenditure on Athens of money which was not Athenian. His chief opponent was Thucydides (not the historian), who, on the death of Cimon, succeeded to the leadership of his party. But to all the indignant arguments of dishonour brought upon Athens Pericles returned but one answer, that as long as Athens kept off Persian invasion she could spend the money as she pleased. "In short, I say that the whole city is an education for Greece." And when we look upon the buildings of the Periclean age we must confess that if the money for them was dishonestly taken, at least it was spent upon a noble purpose.

## SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Was Pericles (a) a wise, (b) an honest man?
4. What mistakes did he make?
5. How did the Confederacy of Delos become the Athenian empire?
6. Were the Athenians justified in making it such?

## CHAPTER XV

## ATHENIAN LIFE

**The Acropolis** Since it was under Pericles' influence that Athens reached the zenith of her greatness, we cannot do better than transport ourselves in spirit to the city and try to picture what it was like in the year 432 B C. Let us take a walk abroad in the streets and pass to the western end of the Acropolis. As we climb the sloping road, we see on our left the Areopagus, a rocky knoll overlooking the Agora<sup>1</sup>. No building stands upon it, only a flight of rough-hewn steps leads up to a levelled platform surrounded with seats cut out of the living rock. We may not go there. It is the Hill of Ares, or, as some say, the Hill of Curses<sup>2</sup>, sacred to the Eumenides, the awful goddesses who pursue the murderer. The venerable council of the Areopagus alone climb that hill to try a murderer for his life. We will keep on.

In front of us are the magnificent "Propylaea", the entrance gates of the Acropolis, with their gleaming steps and colonnades of Pentelic marble, a worthy approach indeed to Athene's own citadel. This is the triumph of the architect Mnesicles. On a projecting bastion to the right stands a small temple of Athene, the giver of victory, looking towards Salamis, the scene of the triumph over the Persians which it commemorates. Rightly has the sculptor carved on the frieze<sup>3</sup> Athenians fighting the barbarians, and, on the balustrade which surrounds the temple, winged figures of Victory attending upon the goddess.

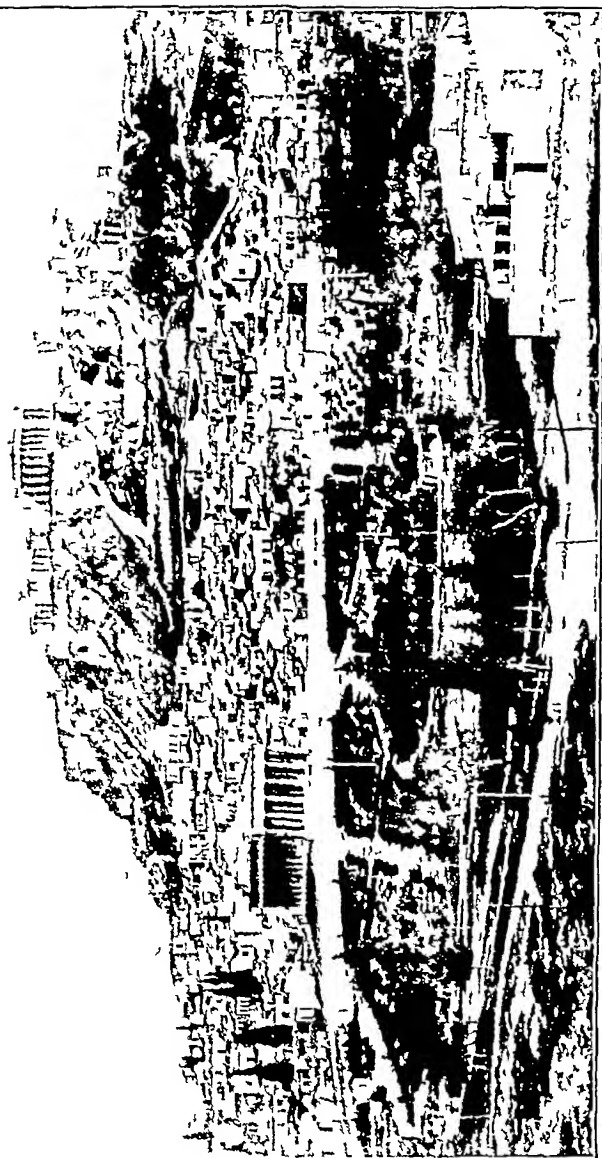
Now we have mounted the steps, and there, towering in front of us on a huge pedestal, stands the mighty bronze

<sup>1</sup> The market place

<sup>2</sup> 'Apal

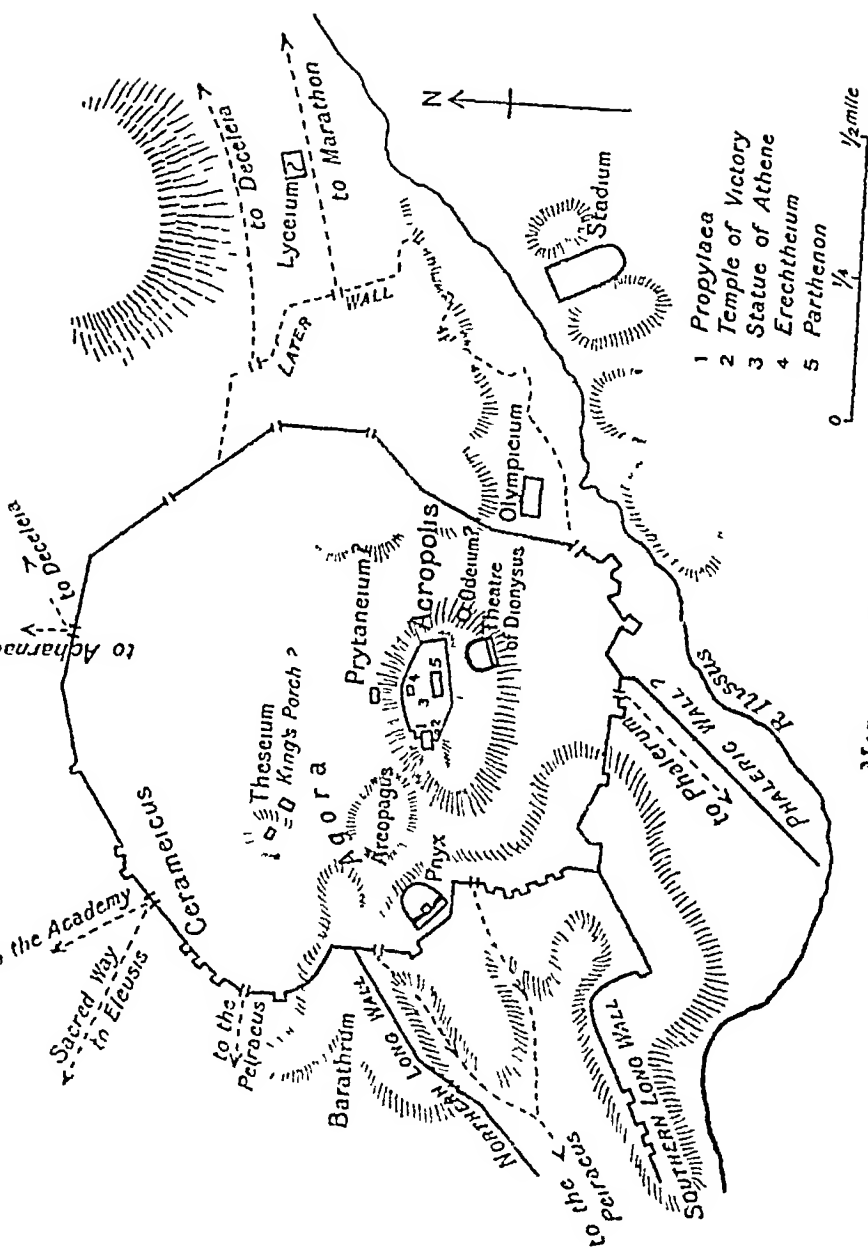
<sup>3</sup> The frieze is the band of sculpture which runs along the wall near the top





Athens

(View of the Acropolis from the N W In the foreground is the Ilseum On the Acropolis are the Propylaea at the west end, and the Parthenon in the middle with the Erechtheum in front of it West of the Acropolis is the Areopagus Mt Ilmettus lies in the background )



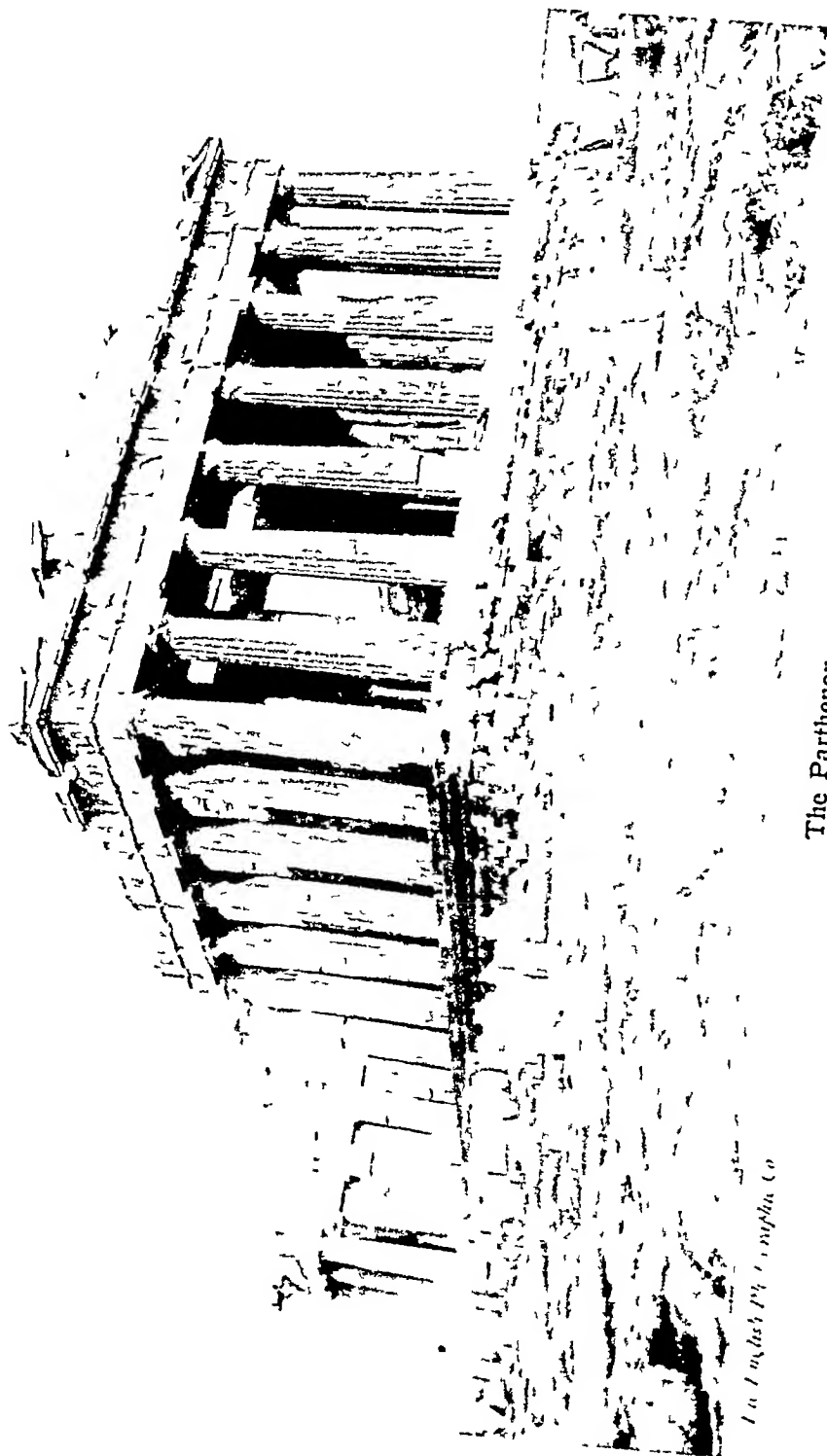
MAP IO ATIENS

statue of Athene pointing out to sea It is sixty feet from the ground to the tip of her spear The sailors say that they can see her helmet flashing in the sun as they round Cape Sunium at the southern point of Attica This is one of the greatest works of Pheidias, a trophy made from the spoils of Marathon

Let us go a few steps further, till we are on the highest point of the slope Here on our left is the old shrine of Erechtheus, almost the earliest of the kings, and of Athene Polias, the guardian of the city The builders are still at work That hasty reconstruction after the Persian war was not good enough It is being rebuilt in true Ionic style No Dorian plan must be allowed in this most holy place See this northern porch, with its delicate columns and graceful capitals<sup>1</sup>, and the ornamentation upon that doorway On the other side, look, is the porch of the maidens, the Caryatids, as some call them What a beautiful effect is produced by their figures supporting the roof! How much more graceful they are than stiff columns! Inside we do not go, but there is the sacred olive tree, the snake of Erechtheus, the pool of salt water where Poseidon's trident struck the rock, and, most sacred of all, the Palladium, the ancient wooden image of Pallas Athene herself, to which is borne the "peplos", the robe that is carried in the Pan-Athenaic procession every four years

But though this is the most holy place, the pride of the city is the new temple upon our right, the Parthenon, the home of the maiden goddess, Athene Parthenos We must walk round its gleaming columns The Doric style is severe and simple, but it is magnificent Cimon and Themistocles began to build, but there was not money to do more than lay the foundation then With the tribute of the allies Pericles has indeed reared a noble house for the deity The fame of its architects, Ictinus and Callicrates, has spread throughout Hellas, and the former has been engaged by the Arcadians to build them a temple at Bassae near to Phigaleia (see Pl XXXVII)

<sup>1</sup> The capital is the top of the column



The Parthenon  
(View from the N W An example of the Doric style)





Look at the pediment<sup>1</sup> at this eastern end, above the door of the shrine. It represents the birth of Athene. How the figures stand out clear against the painted red background! At the western end, above the door into the treasury, the pupils of Pheidias have portrayed the fight for the land between the goddess and Poseidon. Look up, too, at this frieze inside the columns, with all its rich colouring. Do you see the figures in the procession carrying the robe<sup>2</sup>? Six years ago was the day when, after the music, the races, and the games, all the citizens marched up here. The flat summit of the rock was tightly packed, while this altar by which we stand ran red with the blood of the victims, the smoke of sacrifice ascended to the heights of Olympus, and Pheidias' great masterpiece, the gold and ivory statue of the goddess, was dedicated in her new home. The gold alone, they say, weighs forty talents. And now he is employed at Olympia making a gold and ivory statue of Zeus for the new temple there, which is to be the biggest in Greece.

Let us look over the edge of the Acropolis wall that Cimon built. There to the south-east rises the great ridge of Mt. Hymettus. Outside the city is the small stream of Ilissus, with trees and grass beside it. Close by are the foundations of the great temple of Olympian Zeus, Peisistratus and his sons began it, but the Persians overthrew as much as they had built, and no one has attempted to restore it since. Just under our feet, cut out of the Acropolis slope, is the theatre of Dionysus, with his temple hard by. To-morrow is the festival of the god, and we will go and see the dramatic contests in his honour. Next to it is the Odeium which has been built for musical performances, with its roof made from the spars of captured Persian ships.

<sup>1</sup> The pediment is the triangular space of the gable at the end of a temple (see Pl. XVII)

<sup>2</sup> Most of the remains of the Parthenon sculptures are in the British Museum, where they are known as the Elgin Marbles.

<sup>3</sup> £134,400. A talent (57½ lbs.) of silver, the usual standard of reckoning for large sums, was worth about £240. A talent of gold was worth fourteen times as much in Pericles' day, i.e. £3360.

Now we will go on and look at the view from the western end. There is the Pnyx<sup>1</sup> on the hill opposite to us, with the people already gathering for the assembly, beyond are the lines of the Long Walls running down to the sea. Another day we must go down to the Peiræus and see the new town with its rows of parallel streets, the new wharves, and the new Exchange where the merchants display their wares, there are new temples too at Eleusis, at Rhamnus close to Marathon, and at Cape Sunium. Below us to the north is the Agora, and on the rising ground hard by is the temple of Theseus<sup>2</sup>, which was built when Cimon brought the hero's bones from Scyros, while, outside the walls, the Sacred Way to Eleusis crosses the Cephissus amidst the olive groves that surround the Academy<sup>3</sup>.

**The Pnyx** Now let us hasten to the Pnyx. The scene when we arrive is a noisy one. A goodly number of people have assembled, and some bear marks of red upon their clothes. The slaves have been sweeping the streets with the painted rope in order that the numbers may be sufficient, and none who have been touched dare fail in their attendance. Great is the laughter at their expense. The matter in hand is dull and not important. The "Proedri" have laid it before the people, and a well known bore has mounted the "bema" to speak. He is fond of his own voice, but the people are not. Shouts, cries, and hisses punctuate his speech, and at length he is persuaded to desist. No one else wishes to come forward. Pericles is not there. The matter is put to the vote and carried by a show of hands, and the assembly is dismissed.

**The Agora** We will go with the crowd towards the Agora and see what there is of interest. Here too are fine buildings. Under the Acropolis stands the Prytaneum, the hearth of the

<sup>1</sup> The usual place for the meeting of the Ecclesia.

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether what is now called the Theseum is really the temple of Theseus.

<sup>3</sup> A famous gymnasium, with grounds laid out by Cimon, afterwards the resort of Plato and his philosophic school.



*The English Photographic Co*

### The Parthenon Frieze

(Most of the Parthenon sculptures, known as the Elgin Marbles, are now in the British Museum. The skill of the sculptor is shown by the fact that none of the figures in the frieze stand out as much as two inches



state, where the archon lives, and public benefactors and foreign embassies are entertained at the state's expense. Over there is the great hall where the council meets. Hard by are the law courts, packed with jurymen drawn from the humblest ranks of the citizens, whom Pericles has thus provided with a livelihood. There is the Painted Portico, adorned with frescoes by Polygnotus, whom Cimon brought from Thasos, and with the famous picture of Marathon that Athenian artists painted. There too is the King's Portico, where the king-archon has his court, but it is no legal business that occupies him to-day, he is engaged in settling the details of the festivals. Up there is the old theatre, where the booksellers display their stock. As usual a knot of men is about their stalls, examining the papyrus rolls and haggling about the price. A copy of Homer's *Iliad* is an expensive thing, but the odes of Pindar or Simonides, or a play by Aeschylus, may be purchased for a reasonable sum. What most men wish to obtain is the wonderful history of the Persian war written by Herodotus. The work is not yet complete, but parts of it are on sale and are eagerly bought as fast as the publishers' slaves can copy them.

In the streets round the Agora are the shops, the boot-makers' here, the winesellers' there, the jewellers' in another place. On the far side is the potters' quarter, the Cerameicus, where we may see the workmen making vases of every shape. Most famous of all is the fine red-figured Attic ware, on which the artists sign their names and which they export to every part of the Greek world. Stalls are pitched in the open space, or more often the goods are displayed upon the ground. Here are the countryfolk, their donkeys laden with figs and olives, with sticks and charcoal, with herbs and vegetables. There go the pedlars hawking fish, pottery, toys, ribbons, and embroideries. Among the crowd move the police and the inspectors of the market. Citizens, slaves, and strangers jostle one another in the throng. Rich and poor, beggar and fop, buying and selling and bargaining, arguing and chatting to their friends,—almost all the city is in the

market-place before midday Only the women are absent, for Athenian ladies are not often seen in public, except upon special occasions They live in modest seclusion and mind the home, not like the Dorian women, who boldly mix with the men

Look there at that group Surrounded by a number of admiring followers, a short, thick-set man with snub nose and ugly but good-natured face is holding in conversation a young gallant who fancies himself to be an authority upon politics The ugly man is asking for information, but the other is blushing and getting shorter and shorter in his replies "Then either our former conclusion was false, or, if it was right, we now are wrong" "So it seems" "Well then, my friend, pray explain to me exactly what statesmanship is, that I too may know" "Another time, another time, Socrates, I must be off, for it is past midday and my friends are waiting for me" The questioner is the young sculptor, Socrates He is always to be found in the Agora, in the gymnasium, or in the streets, talking to anyone he may meet He pretends to know nothing, and asks others to explain to him Then, when he has flattered and entrapped the unwary into conversation, he presently leads his victim to contradict himself and reveal his ignorance Young though he is, only seven and twenty, he is one of the wisest of men He considers that all wrong actions are the result of ignorance, and so he goes about the city, exposing the shallowness of men who imagine that they know, and trying to stimulate them to examine themselves and think If then they come to him again, he is always willing without payment to help them to think aright and find out the truth of things Far different is he from Protagoras and Gorgias, the fashionable teachers known as "Sophists", who profess to fit young men for public life and to teach them all they may require They never would condescend to talk in the streets, but lecture in private houses to a select audience, and charge a talent for the course A hardy man too is Socrates Sandals or shoes he never wears An "himation"<sup>1</sup> is his only covering, summer

<sup>1</sup> The outer garment



*The English Photographic Co*

**The Athene Parthenos of Pheidias**

(A marble statuette, a poor and late copy of the original statue  
of gold and ivory)





or winter Most of us wear a "chiton"<sup>1</sup> underneath, but he is insensible to cold or comfort He has been seen standing barefoot in the winter snow for hours in some fit of abstraction, pondering his deep thoughts

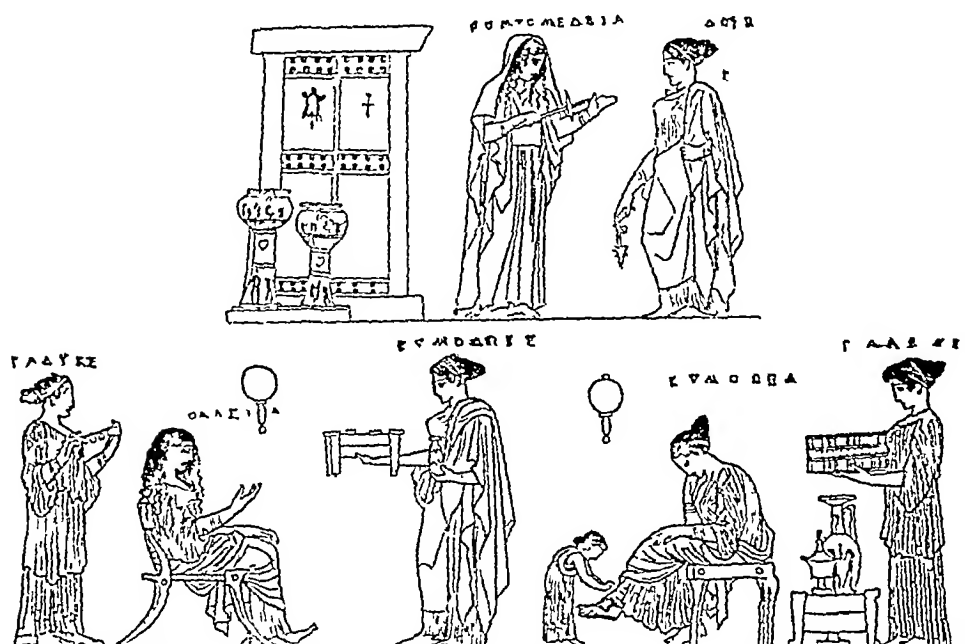


FIG 2 GREEK FEMALE DRESS

The gymnasium But now the crowd is thinning The buyers have bought their goods, the market folk have sold their stock, the fashionable world has gone to the barber's for a chat, or to its clubs, or home for lunch We will buy food here at a shop, and then walk to the Lyceum, as the gymnasium outside the eastern gates is called, for men congregate there in the afternoon Going in the same direction are many boys accompanied by their attendants<sup>2</sup> Their morning studies at the schools are done, reading, writing, literature, and music

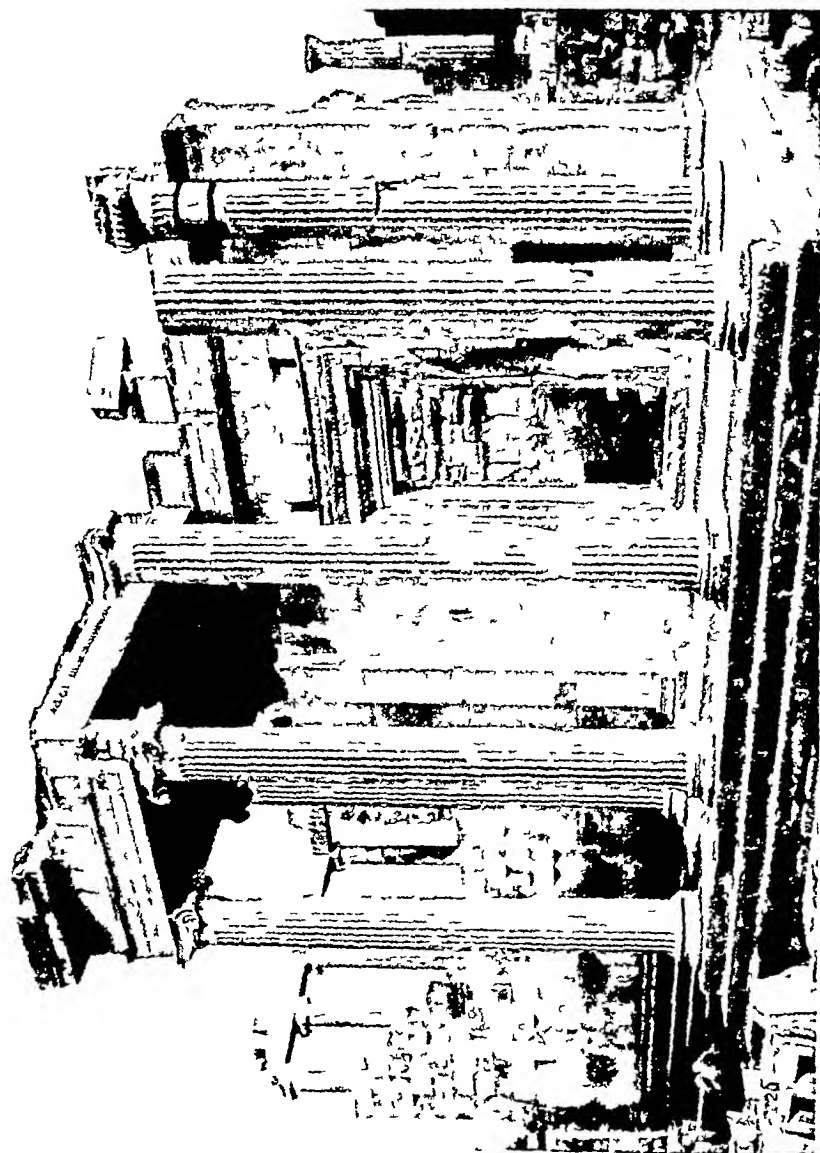
<sup>1</sup> The inner garment or shirt Both were made of wool or thinner material according to the weather The dress of men and women was much alike The children's garments were the same but shorter Slaves wore a chiton only Cf illustrations of dress above and Pl XXIV

<sup>2</sup> παιδαγωγός

The afternoon is the time for gymnastics and games. The Lyceum is filling fast. In the porticoes the older men are chatting and looking on, the younger are engaged in boxing, wrestling, running, jumping, and practising with spear and quoit, the boys are going through their exercises and competitions under the trainer's eye. First they strip and anoint themselves, it is no easy matter for a wrestler to hold his opponent naked and covered with oil. When the contests are over, they scrape themselves free from sweat and dust, and then they take their bath. As the afternoon draws to a close we wend our way homewards to take our evening meal and quietly retire to rest.

**The theatre** When we wake it is a bright March morning. The city is crowded with folk from every part of Attica and with many a stranger too, for it is the first day of the great festival of Dionysus. Men in their white robes, and even women to-day in their gaily coloured and embroidered garments, are thronging the streets on their way to the theatre where the dramatic contests, tragedy and comedy, are about to be held in honour of the god. We move along with the crowd, eager to get good seats, for both Sophocles and Euripides are producing plays, and each has obtained one of the wealthiest of the citizens to train the chorus and stage the piece for him. But so great are the numbers that it is long before we can enter and climb upwards to our seats. Our places are rather high and far from the stage, for many of the better ones are occupied by the poorer citizens who were waiting about the entrance long before the dawn. Even the poorest can come in now that Pericles has persuaded the assembly to grant them the price of their tickets. But still the actors' voices will carry all over the theatre in spite of its size. Last of all come in the officials of state, foreign envoys, winners in the national games, and the priest of Dionysus, and take the seats which have been reserved for them in the front row.

Now a herald comes forward to proclaim silence, and a hush falls upon the thousands that pack the vast theatre.



The Erechtheum  
(The northern porch An example of the Ionic style)

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Presently the sound of flute and pipe is heard, and from either side comes in the chorus to march in solemn procession round the altar in the centre of the orchestra<sup>1</sup> Beyond them is the stage, and behind that is an architectural background, which in the present case represents a palace There is a pause, and then the play begins, the first of a series of four by the poet Sophocles Suddenly the twelve old men who form the chorus move towards the stage with cries of lamentation, others, men and women, rush in from the wings and join in their appeals for help The door of the palace opens, and out steps the leading actor, wearing the high-heeled boots of



FIG 3 TRAGIC AND COMIC MASKS

The actor always wore a mask with open mouth so that his voice might be heard

tragedy and the mask and wig His royal robes show that he is a king, and his first words proclaim that he is the famous Oedipus<sup>2</sup> of Thebes, whose fearful story all men know He asks what is the matter His suppliants describe the horrors of the pestilence that devastates their land, and implore his aid in removing the curse that heaven has sent upon them Oedipus tries to soothe them, saying that he has already sent to Delphi to enquire of the oracle At this moment the envoy

<sup>1</sup> Ὀρχήστρα, the dancing place of the chorus

<sup>2</sup> The actual date of the production of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* is uncertain

returns, bringing the god's answer that the murderer of the former king, Laius, is yet in the land and must be driven out. A few years before, Laius had been slain near Delphi by an unknown hand, while the land of Thebes was being harried by the monster called the Sphinx. Just then Oedipus, supposed to be the son of the king of Corinth, reached the city, flying from his home to avoid fulfilling the oracle which said he would slay his father and marry his mother. He freed the land from the

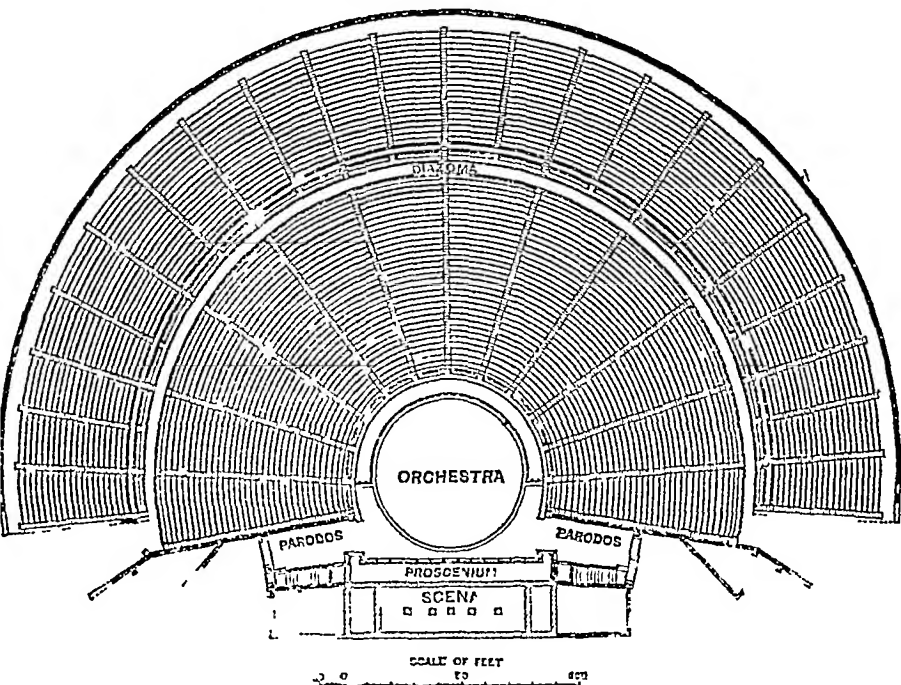
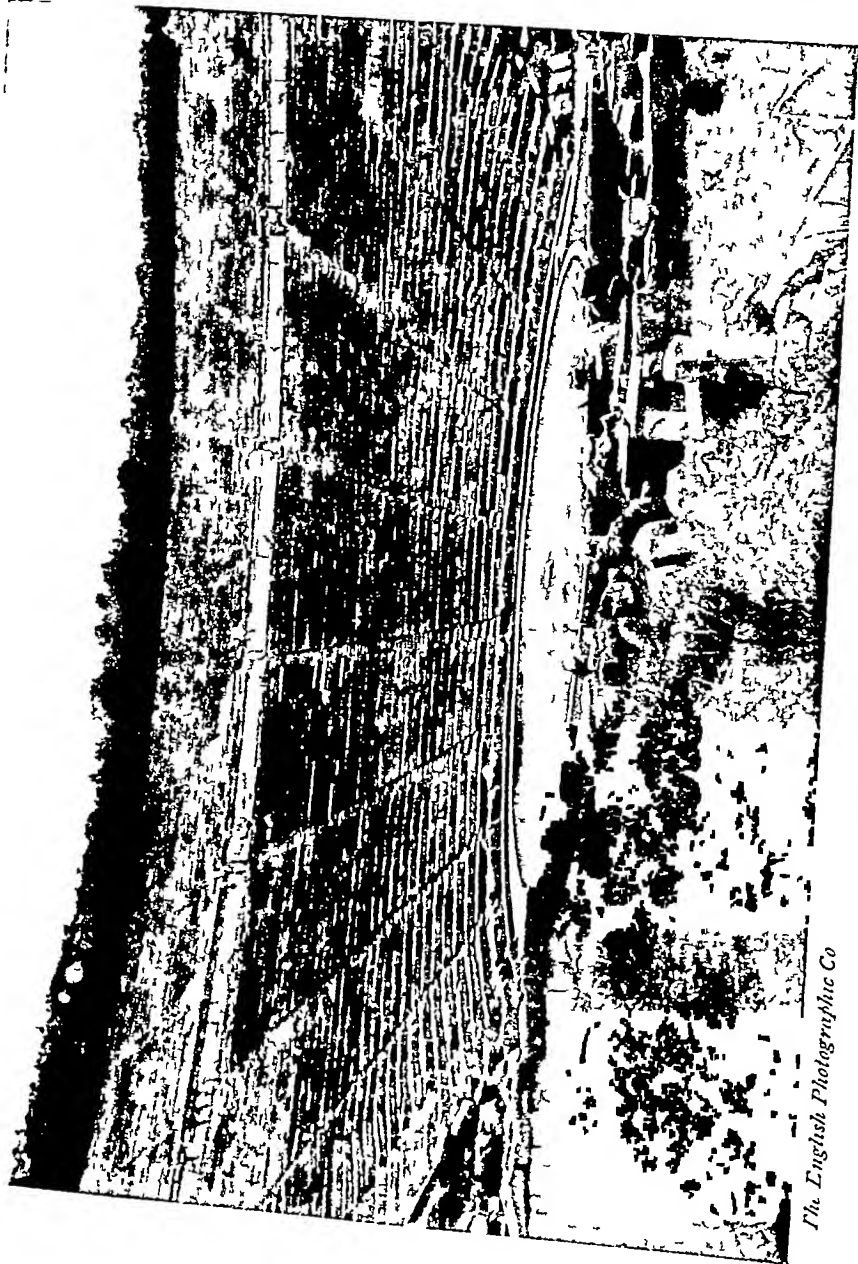


FIG. 4. PLAN OF THE THEATRE AT EPIDAUROS

Sphinx and married Jocasta, the widowed queen. For a time all went well, but then the plague broke out. Who, then, was the murderer of Laius? The scene is ended by a beautiful ode in which the chorus call to the various gods for help. Then the aged seer, Teiresias, comes in and, when forced to speak, accuses Oedipus of being responsible for the plague. Gradually the awful truth comes out, hard though it is to believe. Oedipus recollects that he did once kill a man by



The Theatre at Epidauros

*The English Photographic Co*





the road A herdsman enters and explains how Oedipus was really the son of Laius, not of the king of Corinth The god's prophecy has been fulfilled he has, although unwittingly, slain his father and married his mother, the two most awful crimes that could violate the sanctity of family life Jocasta rushes off and hangs herself, while Oedipus, finding her dead body, seizes her brooch and plunges it into his own eyes Then comes the last pathetic scene, the blind man bidding farewell to his children and wandering forth friendless into exile with the curse upon him

Silence hangs over the theatre We are moved not to applause but to tears It will be a relief when the next play begins, and the last of the group at any rate will be of a lighter nature

Hour after hour the plays go on, with intervals between, until the series is finished The sun is dropping in the west as the crowd pours out of the theatre and wends its way homeward to eat the evening meal To-morrow the scene will be repeated, but we shall see the plays of Euripides The treatment, we know, will not be quite the same None can excel Sophocles in the sweetness and the artistic beauty of the choric ode, or in the ideal simplicity of the characters he presents Aeschylus before him was grand in his rugged style, but too majestic Euripides will give us more of a human touch, his characters will be more real, and he will be bolder in his treatment of the gods They say he has no fear for them, he is one of that circle, Pericles and his mistress Aspasia, Pheidias the sculptor, and that young Socrates, who follow the teachings of the Ionian philosopher Anaxagoras and disbelieve the old stories of our deities Next day we shall have another series of tragedies, and the day after we shall laugh at the comedies They will caricature and ridicule unsparingly the Sophists, those professors of wisdom, or the enthusiastic jurymen in the courts, or maybe the demagogue full of promises at the Pnyx, they will have a hit at all the follies, fads, and fashions of the day But the comic poets must produce their most brilliant wit and fun, for rumour has

it that a young man whose name is Aristophanes will one day soon eclipse them all in fame. Then, when the plays are over, the judges will decide which poet has won the prize, and the victorious "choregus"<sup>1</sup> will set up his monument in the Street of Tripods.

**A dinner-party** We must hasten on our way, for we must bathe and dress before we dine. The sun is setting as we pass along the mean, narrow, ill-paved street, and stop before the house of Neocles. The blank street wall does not look inviting, but a hospitable welcome awaits us when the porter opens to our knock. Our host is not a wealthy man, but his home is comfortable and he will give us of his best. His slaves, too, are well trained, and he hired an excellent cook when he bought his provisions in the market. We enter and cross the court, and are shown into the dining-room. Neocles greets us warmly. He is, of course, by himself, since there are guests; his wife does not appear. The slaves take off our sandals and wash our feet and hands, garlands of roses are placed upon our heads, and we are directed to our couches. There should be eight of us, disposed two upon a couch, but a friend has dropped in and room has been made for him as well.

The slaves bring in the tables, and the dinner begins. Broth, hare, and fish alike are excellent, the sauce has a piquant flavour, no wine could be better than this Lesbian. We wipe our fingers on the bread and throw the pieces to the dogs. The slaves remove the first tables and bring in the second set, laden with cakes and fruits. When all have had their fill, we pour out a libation of neat wine to the gods, and then the drinking-party<sup>2</sup> begins. It is agreed, however, that none shall be compelled to drink, he who will, shall remain sober. The wine and water are mixed in a bowl, and further libations are made. Two flute girls enter, and play and dance for a while. A game of "cottabos" is proposed, and all see who can throw their "heel-taps" with the greatest skill into the bowl in the centre of the room. Suddenly a noise is heard without, and a

<sup>1</sup> The wealthy citizen who staged the play

<sup>2</sup> συμπόσιον



Sophocles

(This shows the way in which the "himation" was worn)



party of revelling friends enter in boisterous humour, the newcomers are made welcome, fresh stories are told; and laughter rings through the house. As the evening wears on, some of the guests take their departure, but others linger till midnight. Then the last bid farewell, and Neocles is left alone.

SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Describe the performance at Athens of any Greek play you have read
- 3 Upon what subjects could an Athenian and an Englishman have an interesting conversation?
- 4 Compare life, government, etc. in England and in Athens

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE OUTBREAK OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The real cause of the Peloponnesian war. The Thirty Years' Peace arranged by Callias in 445 B.C. was not destined to last for its full term. The war to which it had put a stop had not been fought to a finish, and both parties knew that sooner or later it must be resumed. As an imperial city Athens had been by no means harsh, and her conduct on the whole compares favourably with that of any other ruling state in the history of the world. Pericles declared, with some truth, that, if Sparta claimed to be the leader of her Peloponnesian allies, Athens had an equal right to be the head of the Confederacy of Delos, a contention which the Spartans would never admit. But the mere fact that Athens undoubtedly ruled, shocked Greek sentiment, which cherished nothing so dearly as liberty and autonomy. The majority of her allies would have revolted willingly had they dared, and it was only the fear of the Athenian fleet and the need of her

support to uphold democracy that kept them loyal. The other states of Greece vaguely felt that Athens was doing something wrong, a wrong-doing which they would decry in another, but be only too eager themselves to commit if they had the chance. Thus it was jealousy really that caused the quarrel. The Spartans' cry that they were the liberators of Greece was popular indeed, but it was merely an excuse to cover their jealousy. Till the Persian wars, the Dorian race had been predominant in war and commerce in European Greece, since Marathon and Salamis, Athens had come to the front and posed as the champion of Ionians.

**Special causes** But, apart from the question of race, various states had a grudge against Athens. Sparta looked upon her with a jealous eye. Sparta had been the leading state, but her conduct in and after the Persian wars had been so selfish that she had been put into the background, and the patriotism of Athens, not altogether disinterested it is true, had brought her to the front. But so narrowly Peloponnesian and so slow to act were the Spartans, that they could not by themselves make up their minds to march out beyond the Isthmus, even to crush a rival.

Thebes was ever hostile and anxious to pay off many an old score. Aegina could not forget the loss of her independence. Megara remembered how she had revolted and murdered an Athenian garrison, and knew that at any moment retaliation might come. Corinth was jealous of the commercial state which had cut into her trade. But the Corinthians could not afford to quarrel, their rule over their own colonies was too much like that of Athens over her allies, it would be dangerous to preach a crusade against tyrant cities.

**The quarrel of Corinth and Corcyra** Yet it was through the Corinthians that matters came to a crisis. Corcyra was a Corinthian colony, but had always resented any attempt at control. A quarrel broke out about Epidamnus, a joint colony of the two cities upon the Albanian coast, and the Corcyraeans utterly defeated a Corinthian fleet. For

the very existence of their commerce the Corinthians were bound to try to recover the trade route to the west, and therefore they set about preparing a mighty fleet. Anxious as to the result, the Corcyraeans sent to ask for Athenian help. The Corinthians were equally eager to thwart the scheme, and so it happened that embassies from both cities came before the Athenian assembly at once. The Corcyraeans pointed out that war between Athens and the Peloponnesian confederacy was bound to come, and therefore the Athenians had better secure the considerable fleet of Corcyra for their side. The Corinthians urged, what was true, that more than once they had done Athens a good turn, that war was not yet inevitable, but the proposed alliance would make it so. The question was long debated. At length Pericles persuaded the people to make a defensive alliance with the Corcyraeans, and a small squadron was sent to their assistance. The die was cast, war now was certain. Pericles was right. Athens with her highly organised fleet in commission, with her reserve of 6000<sup>1</sup> talents in the Parthenon treasury and a revenue of some 1000 talents every year, was ready for instant action, the clumsy Peloponnesian confederacy had no money and would require many months of preparation. Yet he would not alienate sympathy by a declaration of war, but would leave that to the other side.

**Battle of Sybota, 433 B.C.** In the autumn of 433 B.C. a great engagement was fought between 110 Corcyraean and 150 Corinthian ships off Sybota near Corcyra. No seamanship was displayed on either side, but the rival galleys tried to board one another and settle the matter by the hand to hand fighting of the marines. After some hours the Corcyraeans were driven back with a loss of over 70 ships, while they had destroyed about 30 of the enemy. To cover their retreat, the small Athenian squadron of 10 ships now took part. After recovering the wrecks and the dead the Corinthians prepared to renew the fight, but the appearance of 20 fresh Athenian ships, which they took to be the van of a big fleet, caused

<sup>1</sup> £1,440,000



them to withdraw. Next day, after lodging a formal complaint that the Athenians by their action had broken the thirty years' truce, the Corinthians raised a trophy and sailed away.

**Revolt of Potidaea** On the isthmus of the western promontory of the Chalcidian Chersonese stood the Corinthian colony of Potidaea. Like the other towns of those parts it had joined the Confederacy of Delos, but, while an Athenian ally, it still had two magistrates sent out annually from Corinth. Suspecting their loyalty, the Athenians bade the Potidaeans throw down their southern wall, which was not needed to repel Thracian raids, give hostages, and dismiss the Corinthian officials, and, since Perdiccas, king of Macedonia, was hostile too, an expedition was sent to overawe the district. The Potidaeans, trusting to the help of Macedonia and to a Spartan diversion in Attica, broke out into revolt and induced the neighbouring cities to rebel likewise. The Corinthians sent them assistance, and the Athenians hurried out reinforcements. Potidaea was besieged by land and sea, and Athens and Corinth were hopelessly embroiled.

**The Peloponnesians decide for war, 432 B.C.** Pericles struck at Megara. A decree was passed closing to Megarian commerce all ports and markets in Attica and Athenian dominions. Megarian trade was ruined. Corinthians, Megarians, and Aeginetans now urged the laggard Spartans to declare war, their envoys were full of complaints of Athenian wrongdoing. The complaints were but an excuse, jealousy and fear of Athenian power were the causes of the war, which was bound to come sooner or later. The Spartans voted for war, a formal congress of Peloponnesian allies confirmed their resolution, and the approval of Delphi was obtained.

**Thucydides** The Peloponnesian war has been fortunate in its historian. Thucydides was a wealthy Athenian citizen, nearly forty years old when hostilities commenced. He himself took part in the war, and in 424 B.C. was one of the generals in Thrace, but his bad luck or ill-success brought about his banishment. Twenty years he spent in exile, collecting information as the war went on. When it was ended, he returned

to Athens and composed his book, but death cut short the work before it was quite complete. His style is cold, severe, and critical, bearing the stamp of truth and impartiality, and he ranks as one of the greatest of the world's historians.

**Character of Greek warfare** The majority of the wars between Greek states were merely petty squabbles between jealous neighbours. A state of declared hostility might last for years, but often only a few trifling campaigns or raids were undertaken which lasted for a few days or weeks. The towns were so small and so near together that a force might march out one day some hundreds strong, meet the enemy on the next, slay a few men, give back the corpses on the acknowledgment of defeat, raise a trophy, destroy some crops and corn, and return home on the third day.

**Features of the Peloponnesian war** But the Peloponnesian war was something infinitely greater. On and off it lasted for twenty-seven years. Most of continental Greece was involved. The conservative and reactionary Dorian race was pitted against the liberal and progressive Ionian league which had usurped the leadership of Hellas. Oligarchy was ranged against democracy.

On the Peloponnesian side were all the states of the Peloponnese, except Argos and Achaea, which remained neutral, there were Megara also, the Boeotian League, Phocis, and the Corinthian colonies on the Ionian Sea. Combined they could perhaps have put a force of 100,000 hoplites in the field, besides a few horse and a large number of light-armed troops. Their fleet was mainly that of Corinth, with the small contingents of other states they could perhaps make up a total of 150 or 200 ships. But by land and sea, while recognising the Spartan leadership, they suffered from the jealousies of the various commanders and cities, and as a whole they were short of money.

The Athenians were in a different position. In the west the Messenians at Naupactus and the Acarnanians could each provide a useful base for interrupting Corinthian trade. Corcyra proved a broken reed, she was soon involved in her

own party strife and bloody massacres, and gave but little help. Plataea was too small to be more than an outpost. The Athenians had of their own nearly 30,000 hoplites and a few cavalry, if they called out all their citizens. The allies of the Delian Confederacy sent them no troops, Chios and Lesbos alone provided ships, but the tribute of the allies furnished the sinews of war. The Athenian fleet consisted of 300 ships in commission, all in the most efficient state, and these could be augmented by the reserves in the Peiraeus, making with the Chian and Lesbian vessels a total of over 500. Above all, the Athenians had this advantage: all their forces were under their own undivided control and accustomed to work together. The only danger lay in the possibility of a revolt of the allies, should any serious disaster befall their arms.

Thus it will be seen that the forces were evenly matched. But neither could deal a deadly blow at the other, the one was on the land, the other on the sea. Athens might raid the Peloponnesian coasts and harry Corinthian commerce in the Corinthian and Saronic Gulfs, the Peloponnesians might devastate Attica or attack the Athenian allies in Thrace. Neither could do much more. And so we shall find that, for the first ten years, Attica, the Corinthian Gulf, and Thrace were the three seats of operations. Pericles had foreseen this and knew the war would be a waiting game, the longest purse would win. His policy therefore was to make no attempt to gain further possessions, but to gather everyone within the fortifications of Athens, the Peiraeus, and the Long Walls, to use the ships as a raiding force, and patiently to endure.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Was the war inevitable? If so, why?
4. Compare the resources of the two sides.
5. Could either side have made better plans or preparations?

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE FIRST PART OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Outbreak of hostilities, 431 B.C. With the spring of 431 B.C. an ultimatum was sent from Sparta to Athens, demanding the independence of the Greek states. The peace-party at Athens raised a discussion upon the matter, but Pericles' view prevailed, and the demand was refused. A few days later hostilities broke out.

The Theban attempt upon Plataea. At the invitation of the oligarchical party within the walls, three hundred Theban hoplites entered Plataea by night and summoned the town to desert Athens and join the Boeotian League. In the first moment of surprise the Plataeans agreed, but presently, realising the small numbers of the enemy, they attacked them just before dawn. Fighting in the dark in the streets of a strange town, the Thebans were at a disadvantage. Many were slain, the survivors surrendered unconditionally. By this time Theban reinforcements, which had been delayed by rain and swollen torrents, approached the town, but, finding themselves too late, they prepared to devastate the country outside. The Plataeans sent out a herald to protest against the treacherous act in time of peace, and, under threat of putting their prisoners to death, induced the enemy to retire. Then they promptly brought into the town all the inhabitants and stock from outside, and, thus secure, massacred the prisoners.

The women, the children, and the infirm were removed to Athens, and Athenian troops marched to help to garrison Plataea. So, with treachery on the one side and savagery on the other, the war began.

**Invasion of Attica** The Peloponnesians now gathered their forces and, led by the Spartan king Archidamus, invaded Attica. Archidamus thought that on his approach the Athenians would submit, and therefore moved but slowly, the Athenians, however, had no intention of giving way, and used the time in sending over their flocks and herds to Euboea and other islands, and in bringing the people and their belongings into the city, the Peiraeus, and the space between the Long Walls. The fertile plain of Eleusis was the first to suffer. Then the Peloponnesians advanced to Acharnae, seven miles north of Athens, where they camped and sent out parties of raiders in every direction. The month was June, the corn ripe, and the trees laden with swelling fruit. The unfortunate Athenians from the city could see the marauding bands doing their work of destruction, burning the houses, cutting down the trees, and trampling the vines and the corn. It was with the utmost difficulty that Pericles prevented them from rushing out upon the enemy in their rage. But that would have been playing into the hands of the foe, who were infinitely superior in number and were trying to draw them out into the open. The Peloponnesians had no engines with which to attack the walls, and the Lacedaemonians were notoriously incompetent in conducting a siege. After a few weeks therefore of ravaging northern Attica, when their provisions began to run short, they retired and disbanded their forces. For most of the next years they repeated their raid, advancing into the other parts of Attica, but it was quite evident that such a style of warfare would never bring the war to a conclusion, for, while the sea was open to them, the Athenians could still import their corn as usual from the Black Sea.

**Athenian raids** The Athenians meantime sent out a hundred ships to ravage the coasts of the Peloponnese, the

Aeginetans were expelled utterly from their island, and, when the Peloponnesians had gone home, Pericles himself led a large force to avenge upon the Megarians the sufferings which the Athenians themselves had lately endured. This raid too became an annual event. But though such expeditions might serve to relieve the feelings of the more ardent and hot-headed among the citizens, they were equally futile as a means of ending the war.

The plague at Athens, 430 B.C. Next year a serious disaster overtook the Athenians. While the Peloponnesians were repeating their raid of the previous year, a terrible plague broke out in the city. Crowded and cooped up as they were during the heat of summer, they were living amidst the most insanitary conditions. The infection was brought by ship from Egypt and broke out first in the Peiræus, thence it spread along the space between the Walls till it reached Athens itself. Thucydides was one of the few who recovered from the disease. Generally the victim died after a week of agonising pain and intolerable thirst. No medical measures were of any use, for no doctors knew the nature of the sickness or how to combat it. Under the circumstances, not many of the bodies could be burned for lack of fuel, nor were there enough healthy people to bury them. Even the dogs and vultures refused to perform their natural office as scavengers. The whole area therefore was polluted, and the plague stopped only when all who were susceptible had caught the infection. The mortality was terrible. Even the ships did not escape: the sickness broke out in the fleet which ravaged the coasts of Epidaurus, Troezen, and Laconia, and carried off numbers of the troops which had been sent to reinforce the army before Potidaea. Apart from the sickness, another terror appeared. Despair set in among the citizens. Hoping to gain a few hours of pleasure before they died, men threw aside all moral restraints, all sense of right and wrong, and abandoned themselves to an orgy of plunder, lust, and excess.

Unpopularity of Pericles. In their distress the people

turned against Pericles. The great leader had always had his enemies. In the first place, there was the peace-party, friends of Sparta, always bitterly opposed to his policy and losing no chance of damaging his prestige. Secondly, there were self-appointed demagogues, leaders of the mob, who were jealous of the statesman's ascendancy and eager to draw public attention to themselves. Of such a type was Cleon the leather seller, a man of moderate ability who had risen to notoriety by observing the moods of the mob and putting himself at the head of any feeling against Pericles or anyone else. He professed to be a patriot, and assailed most fiercely those whose policy did not meet with public approval. Patriotic perhaps he was, but it was a selfish patriotism designed to shed glory upon himself. Moreover he was utterly reckless and without principle, and, by flattering the mob that they were always right, he gave them a good opinion of themselves and their infallible wisdom, which was to bring ruin on the state. Pericles, on the other hand, cared not the least what people thought, he never said anything to humour them, he was ready to contradict them and dash down any overweening confidence. Naturally the fickle mob, led by his enemies, was sometimes wroth with him. Yet when the moment of passion was over they always came back to him, for his incorruptibility, his independence, and his commanding personality ensured respect. As Thucydides observes, "the government was in name democracy, but in reality the rule of the first citizen."

*How such* Attacks upon Pericles' friends. At the moment of the outbreak of the war attacks had been made upon Pericles in the person of his friends. Anaxagoras, the famous Ionian philosopher, was one of the many wise men of his day who were dissatisfied with the silly and often indecent stories of the Olympian gods. In a spirit of scientific research he had pondered upon the origin of the universe and life, and had a purer idea of God in "the Mind", which, according to him, had created and animated all things. In order to wound Pericles, Anaxagoras was charged with impiety, fined, and

driven from Athens Pheidias, the great sculptor, was charged with embezzling the gold entrusted to him for the robes of his statue of Athene, and, when cleared of that by the weighing of the gold, was accused of sacrilege in introducing the portraits of himself and Pericles upon the shield of the goddess He died while in prison The third attack wounded Pericles most He had been unhappily married and, after divorcing his wife, had lived with Aspasia, an Ionian lady of great beauty, wit, and accomplishments The facts that she was a friend of Anaxagoras and that she welcomed the society of intellectual men were the basis of a charge of impiety and ill-repute Pericles himself defended her, and for once the haughty and impassive statesman was seen to shed tears Aspasia was acquitted

During the plague the people, stung by their sufferings, rounded upon their leader Cleon brought against him a charge of appropriating public money for himself Pericles was even condemned and fined, and the assembly asked Sparta for peace Yet, when their proposal was refused, the people veered round again and chose him general once more

Death of Pericles, 429 B.C. But the great man's career was closed In the next year, worn out with worry and work, he succumbed to an attack of the plague

Spartan siege of Plataea, 429—427 B.C. That year the Peloponnesian forces left Attica alone and marched against Plataea Archidamus made generous offers to the garrison, but they were refused, and the siege began As the enemy filled up the ditch and heaped a mound against the wall, the defenders raised their battlements and tunnelled under the mound so that it kept crumbling in, and built a second wall behind the threatened point Archidamus then constructed round the city a double wall of brick strengthened by ditches, sent home most of his forces, and turned the siege into a blockade For eighteen months provisions held out, but at last they began to fail The Athenians, to their shame, made no attempt to help their gallant ally On a dark and rainy winter's



night over two hundred of the defenders tried to break out. While the rest created a diversion on the farther side of the town, the little party crossed the ditches and walls, and almost all succeeded in getting away to Athens. The remainder held out for six months more and were then starved into unconditional surrender. A mock trial was held, the prisoners were asked, "Whether they had done the Lacedaemonians and their allies any service in the war?" Only one answer was possible, and they were led away and slain in cold blood, two hundred and twenty-five in number, while the few women left in the city were sold as slaves. Plataea was then razed to the ground.

**Revolt of Lesbos, 428—427 B.C.** The same summer an equal barbarity was perpetrated by the Athenians. For a year the island of Lesbos, one of the two islands which paid no tribute but kept up a navy, had been in revolt. There were four towns, Mytilene being the chief, which had combined together under an oligarchical government. The fifth, Methymna, was democratic and held aloof. For some time the Mytilenaeans had been laying their plans and collecting stores. They had no complaint to make about Athenian cruelty, but they objected that, now that the Persian danger was over, Athens refused to let them leave the league and dragged them into her own quarrels with other Greeks, they were not allowed the freedom of action so dear to the Hellenic heart.

The first information came to Athens from friendly Methymna before the revolt was ripe. At first the Athenians hardly believed the news, but, when it was confirmed, they determined to strike quickly. A squadron of forty ships was despatched, which drove the Mytilenaeans into their harbour. The rebels now tried to waste time in negotiations, while they sent to the Peloponnesians for help, pointing out rightly that invasions of Attica would never finish the war, but that the place at which to strike was the Aegean Sea, whence Athens drew her corn and her tribute. The Peloponnesians promised assistance, and ordered an invasion of Attica to detain the Athenians at home, while they hauled their fleet over the

Isthmus from the Corinthian Gulf ready to sail to Lesbos. But the extraordinary activity of the Athenians spoilt their plans. While Mytilene was blockaded diligently, a hundred ships cruised in the Aegean to intercept any help for the rebels, and another hundred ravaged the Peloponnesian coast. The Peloponnesians preferred to remain at home, and Mytilene had to hold out unaided. A Spartan squadron sent out in the following spring spent so much time in avoiding the Athenian fleet that Mytilene had surrendered before it arrived. There the mob, mad with hunger, vowed that unless food were given them they would hand over the city to the Athenians. Whereupon the rulers thought it better themselves to surrender to Paches, the Athenian commander, on the sole condition that nothing should be done to them till their fate was settled by the assembly at Athens. Paches agreed. A thousand of the ringleaders were sent to Athens, the rest were allowed to live in their homes.

When the question of punishment was discussed at Athens, Cleon proposed and actually carried the shameful resolution that all the men of Mytilene should be slain and the women and children sold into slavery. A ship was at once despatched with orders. Next day, however, the question was opened again in the assembly. Cleon protested that Athens must rule by terror. His opponents pointed out that the mass of the people in the allied cities were democratic and friendly, and such a punishment would make them combine with the oligarchs to revolt, let them slay the oligarchical prisoners only. The more moderate opinion prevailed, a second trireme was despatched, and by extraordinary efforts arrived just in time to stop the massacre, but the thousand prisoners at Athens were put to the sword. It is hard to believe that such a cold-blooded atrocity could have been possible among a people of such artistic and intellectual refinement as the Athenians.

Phormio in the Corinthian Gulf, 429 B.C. We must now turn our attention to the Corinthian Gulf. The Messenians of Naupactus from their hatred for Sparta, and the Acarnanians, like the Corcyraeans, out of enmity towards

Corinth, were found upon the Athenian side To give them assistance and to paralyse Corinthian trade, a small Athenian squadron of twenty ships under Phormio was cruising in the Gulf

**Athenian triremes and seamanship** Since the days of the Persian wars the science of the Athenian shipbuilders and the skill and seamanship of the sailors had developed the trireme into a formidable engine of war The ship itself was built of fir or pine, some 140 ft in length by 20 ft in breadth A mast and a square sail were used for cruising purposes, but for speed and in action the rowers alone were employed, and a speed of 9 or 10 knots could be obtained The men were seated six on a bench, three on the port, three on the star-board side The man nearest the side of the ship sat lowest, his neighbour a few inches above him, while the man nearest the centre of the ship was higher still The three oars, working against separate thole-pins, issued from one port-hole The total number of rowers was about 200, which would mean some 34 benches Most ships had only one deck, but some seem to have had two The rudders were steering-paddles fixed on either side of the stern To the bows was fastened a three-pronged ram of wood plated with bronze Above the rowers, running from bows to stern was a gangway on which were placed the marines In the old method of fighting, the object was to get alongside the enemy and board But the Athenians had developed manoeuvres in which they trusted to their seamanship There were two principal methods of attack, one to circle round the enemy and ram him amidships, the other to run alongside obliquely and break off his oars with the ram The other Greeks were in terror of the highly trained Athenian ships

**First battle of Naupactus** As a Corinthian fleet of forty-seven ships came sailing west to attack Acarnania, Phormio from Naupactus intercepted it The Corinthians, without thought of attacking, drew up in a circle, their bows radiating outwards like the spokes of a wheel, so that each ship protected the next from the Athenian rams Phormio

and his twenty ships saw their chance. In line ahead they rowed round and round the Corinthian circle, ever getting nearer. Insensibly the enemy backed closer together. Then, as Phormio had expected, a fresh morning breeze arose. In a moment the Corinthian fleet was in hopeless confusion, the ships fouling one another, and the crews swearing and trying to get clear. Now was the chance. In rushed the Athenians, ramming the helpless enemy and then backing clear for another blow. One was sunk, a number were crippled, and the rest took to flight. The Athenians pursued and captured twelve, and then returned to Naupactus.

**Second battle.** Stung by their ignominious defeat, the Peloponnesians gathered a much larger fleet of seventy-seven ships, and with these hastened to attack before Athenian reinforcements arrived. The Athenians liked plenty of sea-room, their opponents tried to draw them into the narrow mouth of the Gulf, where it is only one mile wide. Accordingly the Peloponnesians in fourfold column sailed in eastwards along the southern shore as if to attack Naupactus. The Athenians in single column hastened along the northern shore to save the port. Suddenly the Peloponnesians bore round upon them and drove the last nine ashore. Some they towed off, others were defended by the Messenians from the land. Meanwhile the eleven of the Athenian van had made Naupactus<sup>1</sup> with the Peloponnesians in hot pursuit. The last Athenian ship smartly turned round a merchant vessel which was lying at anchor, and rammed and sank her leading enemy. The rest of the Peloponnesians stopped in alarm and some confusion. Promptly the Athenians dashed out again, scattered the enemy, captured six, and recovered all but one of their own.

**Demosthenes in Aetolia and Acarnania.** These brilliant exploits of Phormio and his men, while inflicting but small material damage, had an enormous moral effect and made the Peloponnesians still more unwilling to face the Athenians upon the sea. Emboldened by their success and eager to use their ships which had been freed by the fall of

<sup>1</sup> The scene of the much more famous battle of Lepanto in 1571 A.D.

Mytilene, the Athenians began to follow the ambitious schemes of the demagogues and desert the policy laid down for them by Pericles. A small fleet was even sent to Sicily to injure Corinth by helping the Ionian cities against the Dorians. Demosthenes too, an able officer, was despatched to attack the Aetolian highlanders, who hitherto had remained neutral, but were too fond of making raids. He soon found he had stirred up a hornets' nest, and retired badly defeated, but he was able to retrieve his reputation by a brilliant double victory in Acarnania over the Peloponnesians and their allies on two successive days.

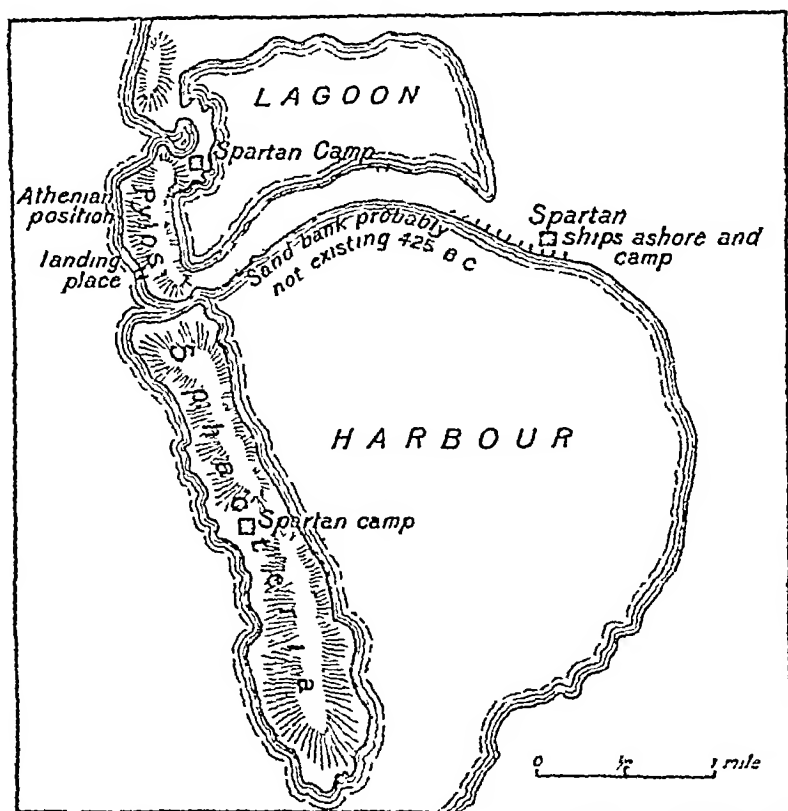
**Pylos, 425 B.C.** This success proved not only useless but dangerous, for it led the Athenians in 425 B.C. to renew their Sicilian schemes. Forty ships under Eurymedon and Sophocles (not the poet) sailed round the Peloponnese. Stress of weather made them put into the old Messenian harbour of Pylos<sup>1</sup> and delayed them several days. Demosthenes, who was on board, wished to fortify the place, but the others refused. However, the men, having nothing to do, amused themselves by building a rough fort on the almost inaccessible promontory. The spot was excellent for harbourage, for defence, for a raiding base, and for stirring up a Helot revolt. When the fort was complete the armament sailed on, but Demosthenes was left there with five ships. On the arrival of the news at Sparta the Lacedaemonian army was recalled from its usual raid upon Attica and sent to capture the intruders, while a fleet of sixty ships was despatched to attack them from the seaward side.

Pylos is the northern promontory of a bay some three miles long. This bay is protected from the sea by the long, rocky, wooded island of Sphacteria, which leaves a very narrow entrance at the northern, a wider one at the southern end. The Spartans intended to block both mouths, and landed 420 of their own men with their Helots upon Sphacteria. They then made a combined attack by sea and land upon Pylos, but the neck which joined it to the mainland was

<sup>1</sup> The modern Navarino, where the battle was fought in 1827 A.D.

narrow, and the only possible landing place was rocky and equally small. And so the attack was driven off.

Eurymedon, for whom Demosthenes had sent, now returned with fifty ships, entered the harbour by both entrances, which had not yet been blocked, and defeated the Spartan fleet. Five vessels were captured, and the rest were battered and



MAP II PYLOS 425 B.C.

driven ashore under the protection of the Spartan troops, while the garrison of Sphacteria was completely cut off. So serious was the situation that the ephors came from Sparta and arranged an armistice: the Spartans in the island should be supplied with food, while the Athenians should hold for the time all the Lacedaemonian ships. An Athenian trireme then sailed with all speed for home, bearing Spartan envoys, who said they were ready to end the war at once and make a

permanent peace, if the Athenians would agree to moderate terms and let the men in Sphacteria go free. They pointed out that the war had hitherto been inconclusive, and, if the Athenians lost this chance of making peace, the wheel of fortune might presently turn against them. Cleon however, in his usual blustering way, persuaded the people to demand hard terms, namely the restoration of Troezen, Achaea, and the ports of Megara, which had belonged to Athens twenty years before. Then, when the envoys proposed a conference in private rather than in the assembly, he began to abuse them and vowed they had no honest intentions. The envoys then left Athens, and the armistice came to an end.

Cleon. But the Athenians on some trifling excuse refused to give up the Lacedaemonian ships. The garrison of Sphacteria suffered from want of food, but boats and swimmers by night tried to run the Athenian blockade, and not infrequently succeeded. The Athenians suffered even more, for their only water-supply was one small spring in Pylos. Weeks passed by, and they began to get anxious lest the autumn should force them to raise the blockade. At home the people wished they had accepted the chance of peace, Cleon grew unpopular. He tried to throw the blame on Nicias, one of the generals, tauntingly remarking that if the generals were men they would go and take the island. Nicias, who hated Cleon, offered him the command and whatever force he liked if the assembly would agree. Cleon, thinking that the offer was meant in jest, at first accepted, then, realising that it was made in earnest, he backed out, but now the assembly took it up and insisted that he should take the command. Finding himself caught, he changed his tone and boasted that with a few light-armed troops he would go and slay the Spartans or bring them to Athens alive within twenty days. The assembly roared with laughter, and most men felt that one of two good things must happen: the Spartans would be captured, or, as they rather hoped, Athens would be quit of Cleon for ever. Accordingly they voted him whatever he wanted, and at his request made Demosthenes his colleague.

Soon Cleon reached the spot and found that Demosthenes had already made arrangements for an attack, for an accidental fire had cleared the island of much of the scrub that hitherto had rendered offensive operations difficult. An assault was immediately ordered, and the southern part of the island was taken. Then some light-armed troops managed to crawl round the precipitous cliffs at the northern end, and appeared on the heights in the rear of the Spartans. The enemy were summoned to give themselves up, and surrendered unconditionally. Thus Cleon by a stroke of luck redeemed his promise and, in bringing home true-born Spartan prisoners, achieved what no other Greek had ever done.

**Athenian activity** The moral effect was great. All Greece was surprised that Spartans should have surrendered, the Spartans themselves despondently asked again for peace, the Athenians in their exultation made the terms impossible. Cleon was now the hero, his aggressive policy was adopted with enthusiasm. Eurymedon and Sophocles sailed on to Sicily, but on their way they stopped at Corcyra to witness the end of the civil strife which had broken out there, and passively to assist, to their shame, in an appalling massacre of the oligarchs by the democrats. The chance of gaining a footing in Sicily was soon gone, for the Sicilian towns, realising the danger of outside interference, made peace among themselves, and the Athenians had to return home with nothing done. The assembly most unjustly condemned both commanders for failure to achieve success where none was possible.

At home the moderate Nicias was forced to act. With a large expedition he raided the coasts of Corinth, Troezen, and Epidaurius, and returned with the spoils. He then captured the island of Cythera, which commanded all approach to the ports of Laconia, and from there and Pylos perpetual raids were made which proved most distressing to the Spartans.

Next an attempt was made upon Megara. A gate in its Long Walls which connected the town with its port of Nisaea was opened by some of the democrats within. The enclosed



space was won and the port taken, and the town itself was saved only by the timely arrival of a Spartan officer, Brasidas, who was at the moment raising troops in the neighbourhood of Corinth

**Battle of Delium, 424 B.C.** Then an attack upon Boeotia was organised. The scheme was that the Boeotian democrats in Chaeroneia in the north should rise on a certain day, simultaneously Demosthenes should land from the Corinthian Gulf, and Hippocrates and a strong Athenian force should make an invasion from the south-east. The plan miscarried. The revolt was detected and suppressed, Demosthenes landed too soon and was forced back to his ships by the whole Boeotian force, and, when Hippocrates two days later invaded the land and established a post at Delium near Tanagra, he was attacked by the enemy, who had had time to march to meet him. The forces were well matched, about 8000 hoplites on either side with light-armed troops and some cavalry. The Athenians were drawn up in the usual line eight deep, the Boeotians were in their various divisions, with the Thebans on the right in a mass twenty-five deep. Both sides charged. On their left and in the centre the Boeotians were driven back, but the heavy Theban force crashed through all opposition and put their foes to flight. At the same moment the Boeotian cavalry charged the victorious Athenians in the flank. A panic set in, the whole Athenian army fled, and only night saved them from utter disaster. A fortnight later the post at Delium was taken. The aggressive land policy of Cleon had received a severe check.

**Affairs in Chalcidice** We must now turn our attention to affairs in Thrace. Potidaea had fallen late in 430 B.C. after a siege of two and a half years, and the inhabitants had been allowed to go upon unusually easy terms. But for the next six years an Athenian force was detained in the district, trying to reduce some other towns which had revolted. At last the Spartans attempted to draw off the terrible Athenian raids from their own shores by stirring up a general revolt in Thrace. They dared not go by sea, it was doubtful if even an

army would be able to penetrate a half-hostile Thessaly and make its way through the wild tribes of Macedonia, for so risky an expedition they sent only Helots, armed as hoplites, and volunteers from the Peloponnesian allies attracted by special pay. The Spartans were in dread of a revolt of the Helots, had already made away secretly with 2000 of them, and were anxious to send off any who would go under a promise of freedom.

**Brasidas.** The man who was in command at his own request was Brasidas, the most capable officer that Sparta produced in the early part of the war. He had first distinguished himself by his pluck and energy in saving the town of Methone in Messenia from Athenian raiders. As one of the commanders in the fleet defeated by Phormio, he had taken some of his men over the Isthmus, manned some rotten Megarian triremes, and executed a daring raid upon Salamis by night. Had the rest carried out Brasidas' own intention, they might have surprised the Penaeus, the entrance to which had hitherto been left open. At Pylos he was the only officer to lead the attack from the sea upon the rocky landing-place "Never mind smashing the ships, get ashore," was his advice. And he was desperately wounded in the attempt. It was he too who, while collecting his forces for the Thracian expedition, had saved Megara from the Athenians. With 1700 men he now marched northwards. The Thessalians forbade his passage. He pretended to negotiate, and in three forced marches had crossed their country and reached Macedonia. Perdicas, the king, was induced to help him, and thus he arrived in Chalcidice. His reputation for dashing exploits and activity, his moderation, honesty, and tact, no less than his un-Spartan eloquence, immediately won friends for himself and his side, and, both then and in later years, it was fondly imagined that all Spartans would prove to be of that same excellent pattern.

**Success of Brasidas, 424—423 B.C.** Town after town opened its gates to him. He wasted no time, but, though it was winter, made a surprise attack upon the Athenian colony

of Amphipolis, which guarded the all-important passage of the Strymon. He seized the bridge during a storm and made himself master of the outskirts of the town. Then he offered generous terms. The mass of the citizens were not Athenian and insisted upon surrender. Thus Amphipolis was won. Thucydides the historian with a squadron of ships was a few hours too late to save the place, and was accordingly exiled from Athens on Cleon's proposal. Brasidas continued his success. Torone indeed was stormed, but most of the towns voluntarily admitted the gallant and chivalrous hero.

Alarmed at the prospect of losing all their subjects and discouraged by their defeat at Delium, the Athenians now listened to the Spartan proposals for peace, and an armistice was concluded for a year. But in the north Scione and Mende revolted, Brasidas refused to give them up, and Nicias was sent out to reduce the rebels, though the truce was observed elsewhere. Mende was recaptured, but Scione held out.

**Death of Cleon and Brasidas, 422 B.C.** Next year a larger force was sent at Cleon's suggestion and with him in command. Perhaps he might repeat the success of Sphacteria. He showed indeed some wisdom, for his first operations were turned against Torone, where the garrison was small, and one assault carried the place. He next sailed round to Amphipolis, where Brasidas was lying. Again he displayed prudence in waiting for reinforcements of Thracian light-armed troops. But his men grumbled at the inaction and had no confidence in him. He therefore moved to reconnoitre the country, and rashly halted his army close to the city gate without considering the danger. Brasidas saw his chance and took it. Dashing out of the gate at the head of his troops, both horse and foot, he flung himself upon the Athenians before they could form up to receive the attack. He himself was mortally wounded, but his men routed the enemy, killed Cleon as he fled, and pursued the fugitives to Eion at the river mouth, slaying about six hundred at the cost of seven of their own number. The Athenians then sailed home, while the Amphipolitans buried

Brasidas in the market-place, set up a shrine, and honoured his memory as that of the founder of their city

**The Peace of Nicias, 421 B C** With the death of the war-like Brasidas and the blustering Cleon, the most formidable obstacle to peace was removed. Sparta was troubled about the occupation of Pylos and Cythera, the danger from the Helots, and the possibility of a war with Aigos, not to speak of her keen desire to recover the Sphacterian prisoners. Athenian aggression had been checked by Delium and Amphipolis and the revolt in Thrace. And so, through the influence of Nicias and Pleistoanax, the Spartan king, a fifty years' peace was signed. Prisoners and captured towns were to be given up on either side, but the Chalcidian cities were not to be forced into the Athenian confederacy against their will. The terms were not fully carried out, for the Amphipolitans, though their city was an Athenian colony, refused to be given up to Athens, Pylos and Cythera therefore were not surrendered. The Thebans only concluded an armistice to be renewed from time to time, while the Corinthians and the Megarians merely ceased from hostilities. Thus the first stage of the war came to an end. Enormous destruction of property, waste of treasure, and loss of life had been suffered on either side. The positive results, to all intents and purposes, were nothing

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 What were the chief theatres of the war?
- 4 What do you notice as the main features of Greek warfare?
- 5 Do you think democracy was a good thing for Athens?
- 6 Whom do you admire most in the chapter?
- 7 With which side are your sympathies?

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE ATHENIAN EXPEDITION TO SICILY

**Spartan troubles** The Peace of Nicias did not bring about any settlement of Greek affairs, and nominally was not recognised by the majority of the combatants, but for nearly seven years there was a cessation of serious hostilities on either side. No sooner was Sparta at peace with Athens than she found herself, as she feared, at war with Argos. The Argives, by remaining neutral for many years, had to some extent recovered their strength. They now combined with various discontented Peloponnesians against their ancient enemy. Both parties tried to enlist the aid of Athens. Nicias and his friends had added to the peace an alliance with Sparta, and this alliance they wished to continue. Undoubtedly they were right. Sparta had never been bitterly hostile. She had been jealous of Athenian greatness, but her interests lay entirely in the Peloponnese and on land. There was no commercial rivalry such as ensured the enmity between Corinth and Athens. A real combination between the two would have been the best guarantee of Hellenic peace.

**Alcibiades** Unfortunately a new leader of the aggressive popular party had come forward in Athens. Alcibiades was a young man of noble and wealthy family who had made his mark in the city. He was a man of brilliant intellectual gifts and great personal bravery, but he was reckless and ambitious, selfish and vain, wholly unscrupulous, and shamelessly immoral. The wildness of his life and the insolence of his daring escapades and drunken frolics made him numerous enemies and shocked the more respectable citizens, such as the eminently pious and worthy Nicias, but they made him a hero and an idol of the mob, who alone had the power to punish him for his more than mischievous pranks and follies.

Amongst his close friends was Socrates, who had saved his life at Delium and viewed his ardent affection for him with tolerant amusement. At first he posed as a friend of Sparta, but, finding that the pro-Spartan party did not value him as a statesman, or indeed wish for his company, he threw himself into violent opposition, and as leader of the mob easily outdid a lamp-seller named Hyperbolus, who had thought to play the part of Cleon. In his own interests Alcibiades urged the Argive cause, by a dirty trick he outwitted and discredited the Spartan envoys, and, though the treaty with Sparta was not disavowed, an alliance was made with Argos.

**Spartan victory at Mantinea, 418 B.C.** The events of the war which followed were for the most part dull and unimportant, but at length Agis, the Spartan king, met the enemy at Mantinea in Arcadia. The two forces were large and not unevenly matched. Among the Argive allies was a contingent of Athenians. Owing to the tendency of Greek troops to move to the right to avoid exposing the unshielded side, each right wing outflanked the opposing left and was victorious. Through Agis' want of skill the Argives were able to penetrate even to the Lacedaemonian camp, but the fighting qualities of the Spartan soldier saved the situation, and in the end the Argives and their allies were defeated. Peace soon followed. The real importance of the fight was that it restored the prestige of the Spartan arms, which throughout Greece had been considerably dimmed by the surrender at Sphacteria.

**Wavering Athenian policy.** The policy of Athens had been wavering and foolish. She had done neither the one thing nor the other. She had not helped the Argives enough to be of use, she had annoyed Sparta without injuring her. No doubt the democratic system was the cause. One day the assembly listened to Nicias, and the next to Alcibiades. Hyperbolus failed to count, for, when he proposed ostracism, the two opponents combined and the lamp-seller himself was the victim. In Thrace too the same weakness was shown. Scione indeed was reduced, the men were slain, and the women were sold into slavery, in accordance with a decree

proposed by Cleon before the siege began. The Spartans had left Amphipolis, but its inhabitants refused to return to their allegiance. After some feeble operations the Athenians concluded a truce which had to be renewed every ten days. They then committed a scandalous crime. On the bare-faced excuse that might is right, they landed an expedition in the island of Melos, which had remained neutral throughout the war, and summoned the inhabitants to surrender. When the islanders refused, the place was blockaded, captured after a gallant defence, and all the men were massacred and the women and children enslaved.

**Athenian ambitions in the West** In spite of the fact that Athens was still surrounded by foes and war might break out at any moment, her citizens still nourished hopes of dominion in Sicily. They thought it was a land of golden promise where all would make their fortunes, and none seemed to realise the greatness of its cities. In the west of the island the barbarian town of Segesta was quarrelling with its Dorian neighbour, Selinus, and in the east Dorian Syracuse had destroyed Ionian Leontini. Leontine exiles asked for Ionian help, and Segestan envoys gave glowing accounts of the wealth of their city, and tricked an Athenian commission into confirming their story.

**The Sicilian expedition, 415 B.C.** Alcibiades, to open a field for his own glory by the conquest of Sicily, Italy, and Carthage, urged on the expedition. He easily persuaded the assembly to vote 60 ships under the command of himself, of Lamachus, a poor but capable soldier, and of Nicias, who had a reputation for good luck and whom, no doubt for political reasons, he dared not leave behind in his absence. The generals were to help Segesta and Leontini and to do whatever they thought best for the interests of Athens. Nicias, who had been appointed against his will, exposed the folly of launching out upon such a wild scheme of conquest abroad while they were surrounded by unconquered foes at home, and made disparaging remarks about the selfish schemes of horse-racing and swaggering young men. Stung by these allusions,

Alcibiades defended his extravagance at Olympia and elsewhere as a patriotic display, made light of the risks, and urged that the only danger was inaction. Nicias then tried another plan, and hoped to deter the people by demanding too huge an armament. But they were seized with the wildest enthusiasm, took him at his word, and voted him anything that he wanted—134 triremes with 25,000 men, a force of 5000 hoplites, some light-armed troops, and, worst folly of all, a man in command who knew that failure was foredoomed.

Eagerly the preparations went on, all men wanted to serve, the triremes were fitted in the most lavish style, the hoplites vied with one another in the splendour of their arms, immense stores were gathered and sent forward in ships to wait off Corcyra, merchantmen and traders prepared to accompany the fleet, never had a Greek state sent out so splendid a force. Suddenly one morning men awoke to find that the Hermae, the busts of Hermes which stood at every doorway and street-corner, had been mutilated in the night. It was an evil omen. Was it one of Alcibiades' drunken tricks? Rumour said that he had profaned the sacred Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter by a mock service in his house. Alcibiades demanded an instant trial, his enemies would not have it yet, the expedition must proceed. So in midsummer they started. The whole population crowded down to the Peiraeus to see them off, with a sudden anxiety gnawing at their hearts. The trumpet sounded for silence, prayers were made and libations poured, anchors were weighed, the fleet sailed out in line ahead and raced to Aegina. They were gone. The city seemed empty.

Hermocrates tries to stir up the Syracusans. News of the coming expedition reached Syracuse, but was at first discredited. When at length an assembly was held to discuss the matter, Hermocrates, a man of great ability and bravery, tried to convince his countrymen that the news was true, and bade them form a league among the Sicilian towns, obtain the alliance of the Italian cities and of Carthage, and stir up Corinth and Sparta to make trouble in Greece. He pointed



out that Nicias was known to be half-hearted, and urged that, if they sent out their fleet and disputed the crossing from Greece to Italy, the whole expedition would probably turn back. Others, however, treated the matter with ridicule and contempt, and as a result the Sicilian preparations were scarcely begun when the enemy reached the island.

**Athenian plans** Coasting round the Peloponnese, the Athenians had reached Corcyra and picked up the store-vessels and merchantmen. Thence they crossed to Italy, where the most that the Greek towns would give was water and anchorage. The city of Rhegium upon the straits of Messina indeed allowed them to purchase fresh provisions, but, though Ionian, remained neutral. Three ships, which had been sent in advance, now returned with the news that Segesta had no wealth after all. Consternation fell upon everyone. Nicias proposed to go at once to Segesta, help it, as promised, against Selinus, and then return home. Alcibiades said they ought to wait and see how many allies they could win, and then attack Selinus and Syracuse. Lamachus urged that they should sail immediately and surprise Syracuse before it was ready. Nicias' plan would have brought them home safe without much honour, Lamachus' scheme offered the greatest chance of success, but unfortunately the middle course of Alcibiades was adopted, with fatal results. For weeks they coasted along the shores of Sicily, revealing their numbers to all, giving time for their enemies to make their preparations, and inducing only Naxos and Catana under the shadow of Aetna to join them. Their base was then established at Catana. (See Map 4, p. 66)

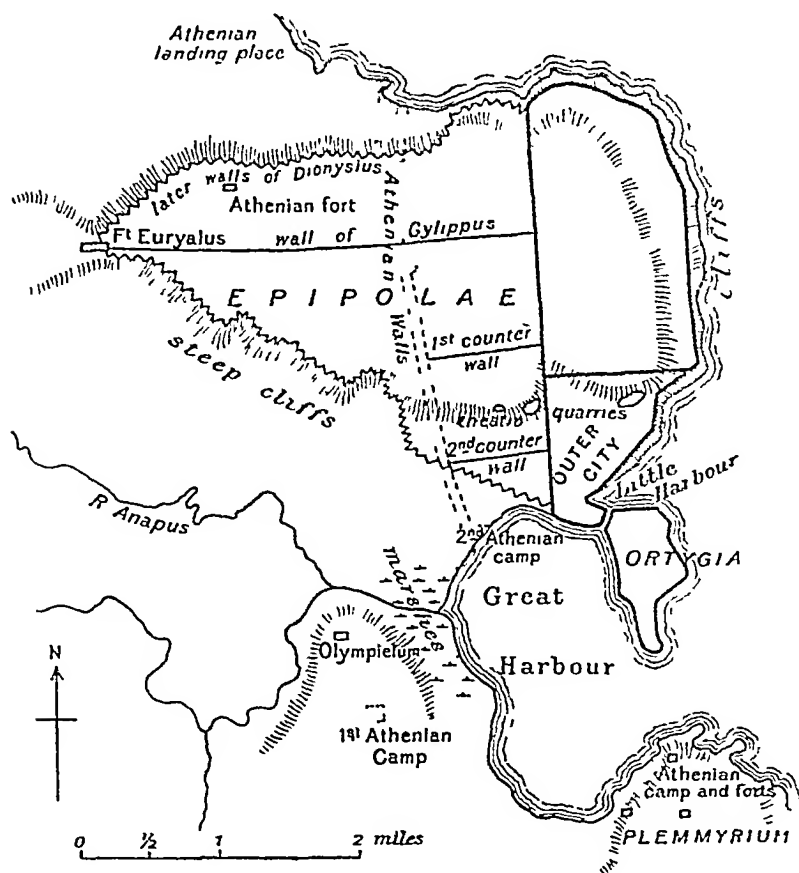
**Trial of Alcibiades** Meanwhile at Athens the authors of the mutilation of the Hermae were undiscovered. Soon a panic reigned, and it was rumoured that a plot was afoot to establish an oligarchy or a tyranny. Many were thrown into prison, and one of them, the orator Andocides, saved his own skin by turning informer, naming others as the guilty, and procuring their execution. The enemies of Alcibiades turned the panic to good account. His name was freely mentioned

The state galley, the *Salamina*, was sent with orders for his recall to stand his trial. On the way home he slipped the Athenian officers at Thurii, and afterwards crossed to the Peloponnese. The Athenians in his absence passed sentence of death.

**First attack upon Syracuse, 415 B.C.** Finding that the Athenians did nothing, the Syracusans under Hermocrates plucked up courage. Parties of horse reconnoitred as far as Catana. The Athenians then sent in a Catanaean to say that if the Syracusans would come at dawn, he and his friends would open the gates and help them to fire the enemy's ships. The trick succeeded. The Syracusans, horse and foot, marched out and bivouacked near Catana. When morning broke not a ship was to be seen. The whole Athenian force had moved during the night, entered the harbour of Syracuse unopposed, and was encamped on some rising ground by the Olympieum, the temple of Olympian Zeus, two miles from the city on the west of the harbour. Hastily the Syracusans returned and advanced towards the enemy, but the Athenians declined to fight. Next day Nicias drew up his troops and attacked his foes before they were ready. The undisciplined Syracusan infantry was put to flight, but so effective was their cavalry in checking any pursuit, that the Athenians thought they could do no more without reinforcements of horse. So they foolishly abandoned the position they had gained, and sailed back to Catana and Naxos for the winter.

**Syracusan preparations for defence.** The Syracusans used this respite to advantage. The city originally consisted of the island of Ortygia, connected with the mainland artificially. On the mainland sloping upwards from the sea lay the outer town, with its northern wall on the edge of the plateau of Epipolae. Facing the sea, between the two towns, was the Little Harbour. The Great Harbour was the big bay to which Ortygia acted as breakwater. To strengthen their defences the Syracusans constructed a wall due north right across Epipolae till it reached the sea, thus enclosing the part which the Athenians might be expected to occupy.

Ambassadors were sent to Corinth and Sparta. Corinth at once promised help, and tried to induce Sparta to act. But the Ephors declined, until Alcibiades, who accompanied the envoys, pointed out the full extent of Athenian schemes in the West and explained that they were but the prelude to an attack.



MAP 12 PLAN OF SYRACUSE

upon the Peloponnese. He bade them send troops, and especially a Spartan commander, to Syracuse, and, above all, seize and fortify Deceleia in north Attica as a permanent offensive base. The words of the Athenian ex-general carried



**Syracuse**

(View from above the back of the theatre Ortygia projects between the open sea (left) and the Great Harbour (right) Plemmyrium rises beyond the Harbour)



weight, and Gylippus, a Spartan, was sent out with a few ships to render help, while reinforcements should follow

**Second Athenian attack, 414 B.C.** In the spring of 414 B.C. the Athenians, who had raised some cavalry from among the natives and from home, moved to the attack. They landed on the north side of Epipolae and forced their way up the rocks on to the plateau before the Syracusans, who were expecting them in the Great Harbour, knew what had happened. They then beat off the enemy, who tried to turn them out, and they proceeded to invest the city in formal style by building a fort at the highest point and constructing a double wall with great rapidity parallel to that of the city. When sorties were of no avail, Hermocrates twice tried to interrupt the Athenian wall by building counter-walls at right angles to it. But both his walls were captured and overthrown, and the Athenian fleet sailed round into the Great Harbour. Yet in the fight about the second counter-wall a great disaster happened to the Athenians. Lamachus, the active soldier, was slain, and the sole command rested with Nicias, who had neither confidence nor energy, and moreover was sick. But for the moment their chances were rosy. The wall went on apace, especially at the southern end, states hitherto neutral thought it wise to join, and in Syracuse there was much talk of surrender.

**Arrival of Gylippus.** At this critical moment Gylippus arrived. At first he thought he was too late, but, hearing that the northern part of the lines was not yet complete, he landed in north Sicily, marched hastily across the island, and through one of the gaps slipped into the town. At once he assumed the offensive, surprised the fort, captured and pulled down the unfinished part of the wall, and with its materials built another counter-wall north of the Athenian position. This he carried far to the west, and Nicias in his turn was besieged and was forced to camp in the unhealthy, marshy ground by the sea.

**Distress of Athenians.** The Athenians now fortified the promontory of Plemmyrium at the southern side of the

harbour mouth and transferred to it most of their baggage and stores, for the emboldened Syracusans began to use their ships and threatened to block the entrance to the harbour. Autumn was approaching, a Corinthian squadron had arrived, other ships might follow, Gylippus was raising allies. The unhappy Nicias wrote home a dismal despatch, saying that the ships were rotting, provisions running short, and the men getting out of hand. The expedition must be recalled or reinforcements speedily sent, with someone to take over his command since he was sick.

Athenian reinforcements voted. But the Athenians refused to abandon their scheme or even to grant Nicias' request for sick-leave. Eurymedon was sent forward in winter with ten triremes and money, Demosthenes prepared to follow with sixty-five more ships, some hoplites, and a large light-armed force, and a squadron was sent to Naupactus to intercept any Corinthian vessels that might start. It is astonishing that they dared send a second large force away, because a few months before, annoyed at the interference of Gylippus, they themselves had openly broken the peace by raiding the Laconian coast, and, when Demosthenes was starting, the Peloponnesians had resumed the old scheme of harrying Attica, and, in accordance with Alcibiades' advice, were fortifying Deceleia.

Gylippus takes the offensive, 413 B.C. During the winter at Syracuse Gylippus had raised thousands of troops from other towns, while the Athenians daily were growing weaker. As soon as the spring began, he and Hermocrates persuaded the citizens to man the fleet and face the enemy in spite of their naval reputation. They divided their eighty ships, some starting from the Great Harbour, some from the lesser, and at dawn attacked the sixty Athenian vessels that hurried out to meet them. At first the Syracusans were successful, but discipline told against numbers, and they were forced to fly. During the night, however, Gylippus had led his troops right round the Great Harbour unperceived, and, when all were engaged in watching the fight at sea, he suddenly

attacked the Athenian forts on Plemmyrium, and captured them and, what was more, the greater part of the stores. The loss of Plemmyrium meant the loss of control of the mouth of the harbour, and the Athenians could get no supplies through from outside without having to fight with a blockading squadron. To the north the wall of Gylippus hemmed them in, while any attempt to forage to the south-west was checked by a force stationed at the Olympieum.

**Battles in the Great Harbour** The Syracusans now tried to finish the matter before the Athenian reinforcements could arrive. Realising that the Athenians built their ships light in the bows, and liked plenty of sea-room so as to manoeuvre and ram an enemy amidships at the weakest point, they cut down and strengthened the bows of their own vessels and determined to force a fight in a confined space, where the Athenians would have no room to row round them but must meet them bows to bows. Then strength of timbers would prevail. A combined attack by sea and land was concerted. From the city and from the Olympieum the double Athenian wall was threatened, to draw the enemy from the sea, and then the Syracusan ships sailed out. Leaving some of their forces to guard the walls, the Athenians rushed to their ships and hastily put to sea. An obstinate battle was fought, but neither side could claim an advantage. Two days later the struggle was resumed, with a similar result. At noon the Syracusans retired, and the Athenians, thinking all was over for the day, went ashore to prepare their meal. Suddenly the Syracusans, having quickly fed, attacked again, and their opponents, weary and hungry and in much confusion, put out once more. The Syracusans met them fairly, their blunt, heavy bows stove in the light rams of the enemy; and the Athenians retired beaten to their station with seven ships sunk and many disabled.

**Arrival and repulse of Demosthenes** The exultant Syracusans now prepared for the final blow, when, to their consternation, into the harbour sailed Demosthenes with 75 ships (*i.e.* 16,000 men), 5000 hoplites, and many light-armed



troops Demosthenes was not prepared to imitate Nicias' foolish mistake At once he assaulted the wall of Gylippus with siege engines, but the attempt failed Without delay he resolved upon a surprise By night he took out all the troops, marched west round the steep and often precipitous face of Epipolae, and surprised the Syracusan fort of Euryalus that guarded the end of the wall Now he was on the plateau, scattered the defenders, and began to demolish the wall itself. But most of his men did not know the ground and, though it was a moonlight night, were broken up in the ardour of their pursuit Gylippus rallied his troops, gathered reinforcements, and attacked the enemy The Athenians were bewildered and often found themselves fighting against their allies or even their own countrymen Presently they were forced back and fled towards their camp Some found their way down, many fell or hurled themselves over the cliffs and perished, others lost their way and were slain in the morning by the Syracusan cavalry

The Athenians resolve to sail home Disheartened by the defeat the Athenian commanders discussed the situation Demosthenes said they had better go home at once before matters were worse, and turn out the enemy from their own country Nicias was full of feeble reasons why on the whole they had better remain until formally recalled by an order from home After all, Nicias ought to know better about Syracusan affairs So the army lingered awhile, till the growth of despondency and discontent and the spread of fever caused even him to give his consent to departure Preparations were secretly made, all was ready for the morrow, but a total eclipse of the moon occurred, and the superstitious Nicias insisted that they must wait thrice nine days as the soothsayers advised

Syracusan victory in the Harbour But the chance had gone The Syracusans renewed their attacks by land and sea, slew Eurymedon and captured eighteen ships, and then conceived the idea of blocking the harbour mouth with a line of vessels moored together The Athenians were in

despair, they must force their way out or they would be starved. All the ships that would float were manned, a hundred and ten in all, and the troops were put on board. Demosthenes took the command. Nicias stayed on shore with the rest to guard the sick and the camp. The Syracusans put out with about eighty vessels. Soon the ships were locked together in desperate fight near the harbour mouth, there was no room for seamanship in the confined space, the ships collided and grappled, and the crews fought with one another hand to hand. The Athenians struggled with the courage of despair, the Syracusans attacked in the exultation of victory. The excitement on shore was intense among the citizens lining the walls and the Athenian troops in the camp, both eagerly watching with straining eyes for the issue which meant freedom or slavery. At last victory inclined definitely to the Syracusans, the Athenians were routed and driven to the shore. Demosthenes and Nicias wished to make another attempt next day, for they still had sixty ships to the enemy's fifty, but the seamen were utterly dispirited and refused to go on board.

**The Athenian retreat.** It was determined to retreat at once inland by night, in the hope of reaching Catana or some other friendly town. But a false message that the roads were blocked by the enemy induced the Athenians to wait. On the next day but one 40,000 miserable wretches, not knowing whither they went, set out westwards. They left behind their ships, their dead unburied, and, most piteous sight of all, the sick and wounded begging their friends not to desert them. The delay had enabled the Syracusans to block the passes in reality. For most of a week the retreat continued, the fugitives headed off in one direction and vainly trying another, the enemy breaking the bridges, holding the defiles, and harassing them with the cavalry. Food and strength alike were exhausted. Presently the army became divided. Demosthenes and the rear were caught in a valley and forced to surrender on promise of their lives. Next day Nicias and the rest were surrounded, thousands were slain,

the rest were made prisoners, Nicias gave himself up to Gylippus

**Fate of the prisoners** The Spartan tried to save the lives of the generals, but the Syracusans were relentless, and both of them were executed. The 7000 survivors fared worse. They were shut up for safety in the deep quarries of the city. There, crowded together, half starved, and exposed to sun and weather, they were kept for over two months, till disease broke out and an intolerable stench arose from the hundreds of unburied corpses. Some of the prisoners were then taken out and sold, but the Athenians were kept there for another six months till few were left alive. The survivors became the slaves of the victors. Thus was annihilated the greatest and finest expedition that was ever sent out from any state in Greece. After such an appalling disaster the power of Athens was doomed and her fall was certain.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 What possibility was there of Athenian success?
- 4 Why did the Athenians fail?
- 5 Discuss the character of Nicias
- 6 Should politics and military command be linked together?

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FALL OF ATHENS

**The situation in Greece** The news of the catastrophe was brought to Athens some weeks after it had occurred. At first men absolutely refused to give credit to the story, so impossible did it seem that two such expeditions could have perished utterly. Nearly 200 of the ships were gone, with all their crews, and 4000 Athenian hoplites. More than half of



**The Quarries of Syracuse**

(Here the Athenian prisoners were confined    Now the quarries are  
used as gardens)



the citizens of Athens were dead or slaves. Her resources were drained. The only fund left was a reserve of 1000 talents<sup>1</sup> set apart for an emergency by Pericles at the beginning of the war. Yet there was no talk of surrender, the disaster brought out the best qualities of the people, all possible economy was practised, and they set to work to build another fleet.

Fortunately the Spartans were as dilatory as ever, instead of following up their advantage at once, they resolved to build more ships and wait until the next year. One thing they at last did realise. Athens was a naval power, she had suffered a great naval disaster, and it was by naval action, which would cut off her corn-supply and cause her allies to revolt, that she could be forced to submission. Thus we shall find that the final phase of the war is fought out on the coast of Asia Minor and not in Greece. The situation was indeed most dangerous. Not only was there danger from the Peloponnesian fleet, not only were the Spartans permanently established at Deceleia to harry Attica and cut off land-communication with Euboea, where the Athenians kept their flocks and herds and whence they drew much of their supplies, but Euboea and Lesbos, like all the rest of the allies, were on the verge of revolt, Chios, the one free island, was begging for Spartan help, Tissaphernes, the Persian governor at Sardis, and Pharnabazus, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, were both ready to support the enemies of Athens, in order that they themselves might recover Persian dominion over the Greek cities in Asia.

**Revolt of Chios, 412 B.C.** As soon as Spartan triremes appeared, Chios broke out into revolt. Other squadrons one by one crossed the Aegean. The grateful Syracusans sent Hermocrates with 20 ships. On their arrival, in spite of all the Athenians could do, the rebellion spread. Samos, however, remained loyal. There the democrats had massacred many of the oligarchs, and fear of retaliation kept them true to the Athenian democracy. Samos accordingly became the centre of Athenian operations. The Lacedaemonian commanders

<sup>1</sup> £240,000

showed their usual incompetence and sluggishness, and further disgraced themselves by bargaining with Tissaphernes that in return for financial help "all the country and the cities which the forefathers of the King held shall belong to the King" So low could Sparta stoop to work the fall of a rival after undertaking the war to liberate the cities of Greece

**Intrigues of Alcibiades** But the ardour of Tissaphernes soon began to cool Alcibiades, having by his conduct made Sparta too hot to hold him, had gone to Chios with the Spartan fleet, but, finding himself regarded with suspicion, he had fled to the court of Sardis There he intrigued with the satrap, with the intention of procuring his own return to Athens He soon persuaded Tissaphernes to cut off supplies for the Peloponnesians, by suggesting that it would be wiser to let the rival Greeks destroy one another An Athenian empire by sea, he said, did not stand in the way of a Persian empire on land Then he approached some Athenian officers at Samos, and found that many of them had no love for that democracy whose rash policy had ruined them and whose vote had condemned him to death He promised that, if they would bring about an oligarchical revolution in Athens and procure his own recall, he on his part would bring Tissaphernes and Persian gold to their side

**Revolution of the Four Hundred, 411 B.C.** Accordingly Peisander, one of the generals, with some other officers crossed to Athens to lay the matter before the assembly The question was hotly debated On the one side was the loss of their cherished freedom, if they chose Alcibiades and Persian gold, on the other side loomed destruction At length a vote was carried that Peisander should return to Samos and see what could be done But now a hitch arose Alcibiades could not perform his promises However, the oligarchs had made all their arrangements and determined to carry the matter through without him At Samos they failed the Athenian seamen and the Samian democrats crushed the attempt At Athens they were more successful having frightened the people by political assassinations, they got a vote passed that, instead of

the old government, a body of Four Hundred, that is, their own selves, should have all power in their hands. On hearing this news the fleet at Samos deposed the generals and chose as their leaders Thrasyllus and Thrasybulus, while they swore to uphold the democracy. Moreover they formally recalled and elected as their general Alcibiades, because he had quarrelled with the oligarchs.

**Fall of the Four Hundred and recall of Alcibiades.** The example of Samos was a blow to the Four Hundred. Feeling rose strong against them. In desperation some of them tried to betray the city to the enemy, while others of the party, headed by a cautious and slippery rogue named Theramenes, opposed the traitors. While they were in the midst of their strife, a Peloponnesian fleet arrived off the Peiraeus. The Athenians hastily manned what ships they had, and chased the enemy round Attica towards Euboea. There the Spartan admiral turned and routed his pursuers off Eretria. Immediately Euboea broke out into revolt. In despair at the loss of all their flocks, herds, and property, which had been stored in that island, and at the prospect of the failure of supplies, the Athenians turned upon the Four Hundred and deposed them. At the same time Alcibiades was recalled. Of the traitors, Peisander and some friends made good their escape to the Spartans at Deceleia, others were taken and condemned to death. Yet no attempt was made to blockade the Peiraeus, and once more the Peloponnesians lost a golden opportunity.

**Operations near the Hellespont.** As the summer of 411 B.C. drew to its close, the Spartan admiral, Mindarus, gave up all hope of further help from the shifty Tissaphernes, and wisely took his 73 ships to work in conjunction with Phainabazus on the Hellespont. There lay the danger for Athens. Euboean supplies were gone, the Black Sea corn alone remained, the permanent loss of the Hellespont must mean starvation and surrender. Thrasyllus and Thrasybulus at once put to sea from Samos to keep the channels open, Alcibiades too joined them with additional ships, and, though



Byzantium and several other towns of the district revolted, in the fighting that ensued the Athenians on two occasions had distinctly the best of it and captured many prizes

**Battle of Cyzicus, 410 B.C.** Next spring, his losses made good, Mindarus put to sea with 60 ships. But as he lay near Cyzicus in the Propontis<sup>1</sup>, 86 Athenian vessels under Alcibiades, Thrasybulus, and Theramenes came upon him unexpectedly, having crept up unobserved amidst the driving rain and mist. Alcibiades and the centre attacked, while the wings crept round and endeavoured to cut Mindarus off from the shore. The manoeuvre was a complete success. Many of the ships were intercepted, and, when the remnant ran ashore to the protection of Pharnabazus' troops, Alcibiades landed his men and defeated Peloponnesians and Persians alike, capturing or destroying every single ship and slaying the admiral himself. The completeness of the disaster was revealed in the "laconic"<sup>2</sup> despatch sent home—"The ships are gone, Mindarus is dead, the men are starving, we don't know what to do."

The Athenian admirals followed up their advantage, and in the course of the next two years recovered Byzantium and all the revolted towns of the Bosphorus, the Propontis, and the Hellespont, and even drove Pharnabazus to seek for peace. Thus the Athenians were freed from the danger of starvation which had threatened them, and they gave Alcibiades a hearty welcome when at length he returned to the city. In the elation of the moment the assembly once more let itself be misguided by the demagogues. The Spartans offered peace and the evacuation of Deceleia, but the terms were refused because the Athenians were too proud and self-confident in their temporary success to admit the independence of their rebellious allies. Thus was another of Athens' chances thrown away.

**Lysander and Cyrus.** The next year, 407 B.C., affairs in

<sup>1</sup> Sea of Marmora

<sup>2</sup> The Spartans, of "Laconia", were noted for their brevity of speech, hence arose the meaning of the word "laconic"

Asia Minor assumed a different aspect. This was due to the appearance of two great men. Lysander was a Spartan by birth, but of an inferior class of citizens whose poverty had caused them to lose full rights. Yet in spite of this he had come to the front and was appointed admiral. Brave, able, and incorruptible, but ambitious, cruel, and unscrupulous, this was the man who was to bring Athens to her knees. The narrow uniformity of Spartan discipline ground down all alike into one pattern. As a private soldier the Spartan was well nigh perfect, as a general or a statesman he was almost invariably a failure. In the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian war Sparta produced only two men of ability and originality: the one was Brasidas, the other was Lysander. Fortune had arranged that Lysander should step upon the stage at the time when Persia too produced a man. This was Cyrus, the younger son of the Great King. The conduct of Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus had not satisfied the Persian court, and the prince was sent to Sardis to control them both. The moment that he arrived he sent for the Spartan admiral, conceived a friendship for him, and undertook to finance the Peloponnesian fleet to any extent that might be required, provided that the downfall of Athens was secured.

**Battle of Notium, 407 B.C.** Alcibiades, as a mark of gratitude for his services, had been given sole charge of a fleet of 100 ships. With these he sailed across the Aegean and established himself at Notium to watch the movements of Lysander, who had collected 90 vessels at Ephesus. In the temporary absence of Alcibiades, his lieutenant, a personal friend but a vainglorious and incompetent man, disregarding his explicit instructions swaggered past the enemy and offered battle. Lysander accepted the challenge, and defeated the Athenians with the loss of 15 of their ships. Nothing more serious happened, but Alcibiades, as admiral, had to bear the blame. His enemies at home used their opportunity, he was dismissed, and retired to a castle of his own in the Thracian Chersonese. A few years later he was assassinated by the Persians at the request of Sparta.

Battle of Arginusae, 406 B.C. Alcibiades' place as commander-in-chief was taken by Conon. At the same moment Lysander's year of office came to an end. Callicratidas, the new admiral, at the head of 170 ships, sailed against Methymna in Lesbos and stormed the place. The Athenian fleet was at the moment divided, but Conon from Samos with 70 ships hastened to the rescue. He arrived too late to be of use, and found himself caught by the overwhelming force. With the loss of 30 ships he made the harbour of Mytilene, where he was blockaded by the enemy.

When the news reached Athens, a desperate effort was made to save the situation. Every ship that would float was launched, every ounce of treasure was melted down, every citizen who could be spared was sent to sea, even slaves were offered their freedom if they would serve. A month saw 110 ships upon their way, Samos and the allies provided 40 more, the whole fleet was under the command of eight of the generals. Hearing of their advance Callicratidas left 50 ships to keep up the blockade, and with 120 sailed to meet the foe.

The fight took place off Arginusae, a group of islets south-east of Lesbos. Most of the Athenians were inexperienced and their ships were in poor condition. But they fought in close order without manoeuvring, and thus their numbers told. Callicratidas fought bravely, but was thrown overboard by the shock of a collision, more than 70 of his ships were taken or sunk, the remainder fled, and so did the blockading squadron. Conon was relieved, and Athens was safe again.

Condemnation of the generals. For the last time Sparta made offers of peace, for the last time Athens threw away her opportunity and rejected the favourable terms. But the assembly was guilty of more than folly, it committed an atrocious crime. The Athenians had lost some ships in the battle, and it was urged that, if proper steps had been taken, hundreds of citizens might have been saved from the wrecks when the fight was over. The generals, instead of receiving thanks for their timely victory, found themselves dismissed and put upon their trial. They urged in defence that a storm

had followed the battle, and that they had given orders which had not been duly carried out. No doubt the storm, the confusion of the fight, and the want of training in the fleet, all contributed to the result. Unfortunately for the generals a family festival was held the next day, and public feeling was excited by the sight of so many families in black. A proposal was made that the generals should be put to death. Apart from the injustice, the resolution was illegal in form: the law at Athens provided that the accused should be tried singly. Opposition arose, and Socrates, who was one of the presidents, at the risk of his life refused to put an illegal question to the vote. But the mob grew violent, all protests were disregarded, the generals were condemned and led off to instant execution. Such was justice in a state where every man was an amateur judge!

**Battle of Aegospotami, 405 B.C.** Next year Lysander was again in command, and, with the resources which his friend Cyrus put at his disposal, he gathered together a fleet of 200 ships. When all was ready he sailed for the Hellespont to cut off the Athenian corn supply. He captured Lampsacus on the Asiatic shore and used it as his base. Conon with the Athenian fleet of 180 ships was soon in pursuit, and took up his position at Aegospotami on the European shore opposite to Lampsacus. Four days in succession he rowed across the strait to offer battle, but Lysander refused to stir. The Athenians grew careless, in the afternoons the men dispersed in search of provisions and water, for Sestos, two miles away, was the nearest town. Alcibiades, whose castle was close by, warned them of danger, but was rudely told to mind his own business. On the fifth afternoon, when the Athenians were dispersed as usual, Lysander suddenly rowed out to the attack. Scarcely any of the Athenian ships were properly manned, Conon with a few vessels escaped, and he himself took refuge in Cyprus, rightly fearing the wrath of the assembly at home, all the other ships, 170 in all, were captured almost without resistance, and 4000 prisoners were taken, whom Lysander with savage cruelty put to death.

**Blockade of the Peiraeus.** The blow was absolutely crushing. Within a few months at most Athens must be starved into surrender. The news arrived in the evening, says Xenophon, and the noise of wailing spread from the Peiraeus up the Long Walls to the city. That night no man slept, for they were mourning not only for the dead but for themselves, thinking that they would be treated as they themselves had treated the Melians and many others of the Greeks. Yet even now, with a pluck that compels admiration, they would not give in, but prepared to stand a siege. But the Spartans never excelled in sieges, and a blockade would do the work as well. Lysander spent some weeks in receiving the surrender of the Athenian allies, who submitted without resistance, and in arranging to stop the corn ships bound for Athens. Then he sailed to Greece, and from Aegina he blockaded the Peiraeus. Both Spartan kings encamped before the walls, but soon retired to await the results of famine.

**The Athenians ask for terms.** When food grew scarce, the Athenians offered to surrender and become allies of Sparta if only they might keep their fortifications. The ephors refused to listen, and bade the envoys come again when they had learned wisdom. Next Theramenes was sent to Lysander to see what terms could be obtained. This man, from his habit of changing sides, was known as "Cothurnus", that was the tragic actor's "boot", which fitted either foot. The subtle schemer, already intriguing again for an oligarchy, waited for three months till, he knew, his fellow-citizens must be ready to accept any conditions. He then went back and announced that envoys might go to Sparta if given full powers, and he himself was appointed to head the embassy. There, at Sparta, met the representatives of all the Peloponnesian allies to discuss the fate of Athens. Corinth and Thebes were the most bitter, and, backed by many other states, demanded the utter destruction of the fallen enemy. But Sparta was more humane, she had never wished to press Athens too hard, she refused "to enslave a Greek city when it had wrought great good at the moment of extreme danger for

Greece" The Spartans were politic too the existence of a weakened Athens would prove a thorn in the side of a possibly dangerous Corinth or Thebes

Surrender of Athens, 404 B.C. Accordingly terms were granted the Long Walls and the Peiræus fortifications must be dismantled and breached, all ships except twelve must be given up, all exiles must be recalled, and Athens must be enrolled as an ally and must follow the lead of Sparta When these conditions were made known, the people of Athens at once accepted them with a feeling of thankful relief, the terms were moderate indeed, compared with the massacre, slavery, and levelling to the ground, which all had feared "Lysander then sailed to the Peiræus, the exiles were restored, and the walls were breached amidst the strains of music and wild enthusiasm, for men thought that day was the beginning of freedom for Greece"

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Why were the Athenians beaten?
- 4 Can we, the British, learn any lessons from the downfall of Athens?
- 5 Was Alcibiades the curse of his country?
- 6 Who were the most efficient officers produced by the war?
- 7 Was it a war of real importance?
- 8 Compare Athenian and Spartan character

## CHAPTER XX

### THE SPARTAN SUPREMACY

The obstacles to Greek union With the surrender of Athens the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian war came to an end, and, as men fondly thought, the object of the struggle was secured the cities of Hellas were freed from the

oppressor, and the tyrant city herself was reduced to the rank of a third-rate state. How vain the delusion was in both respects we shall presently see. During the period which had elapsed since the Persian wars, an attempt had been made to combine the states of Greece into one and to realise the Hellenic name. Circumstances had been favourable at the start, hundreds of Greek cities had voluntarily placed themselves under Athenian leadership, the rule into which that leadership had developed was mild, until the Peloponnesian attack provoked Athens to severity, her treatment of the subject-allies was open to little criticism. Yet the experiment had failed. It was not so much the political jealousy of Sparta, it was not only the commercial rivalry of Corinth, it was the inborn Greek love for independence in name as well as in deed that made such combination impossible. Military force and overwhelming superiority alone could achieve union and preserve it.

The Thirty at Athens, 404 B.C. Though Athens had submitted to her conqueror, she was not yet free from her troubles. Living with the Spartans were many of her oligarchic exiles, including those of the extreme party of the Four Hundred who had fled to Deceleia. By the terms of peace these were allowed to return, and doubtless it had already been arranged between them and Lysander that oligarchy should be set up in Athens. This was in accordance with the policy which Sparta usually pursued and Lysander was adopting elsewhere. It was proposed therefore that thirty citizens should be chosen to alter the laws and the constitution. Opposition was promptly overawed by Lysander himself, who was present in the assembly. Among the names were those of Critias, a man of great ability who had been a follower of Socrates, and of Theramenes, now an oligarch once more.

The first step of the Thirty was to do away with all the old machinery of government except the council, which they packed with their own adherents. Their next was to procure from Lysander a garrison of 700 men under a Spartan

"harmost", or governor, whom they carefully flattered and bribed so that he would wink at any of their proceedings

Thus secured, they started a regular persecution of the democrats. Some were slain, others were driven into exile. Among the latter was the democratic general, Thrasybulus. Alcibiades they could not themselves reach, but at their wish Lysander caused him to be murdered by the Persians. The next attack of the Thirty was made upon the citizens at large. They drew up a list of three thousand who were likely to support them, and by a trick disarmed all the rest. Only the Three Thousand were to enjoy the rights of citizenship. A reign of terror now set in. Personal enemies were brought to their death, the wealthy were marked down for destruction, and their property was confiscated, no man's life was safe. In order to implicate others in their crimes, with fiendish cruelty they bade men under pain of death arrest their fellow-citizens. Socrates, to his honour, refused, but he escaped with his life, probably through the influence of Critias.

**Death of Theramenes** But the violent excesses of the extreme party roused protests even amongst the Thirty. Theramenes was disgusted at their crimes. Critias therefore resolved to get rid of him. He proposed to the terrified council two resolutions. One allowed any man who was not of the Three Thousand to be put to death without trial, the other expelled from that body any who had opposed the Four Hundred in 411 B.C. Theramenes tried to defend himself, but Critias brought in soldiers and cried out, "I then scratch off this Theramenes from the list, since we are all agreed, and now we condemn this fellow to death." The victim was seized, torn from the altar to which he clung, and dragged through the streets to the prison. "Here's to the health of the fine Critias!" he cried as he drank the fatal cup of hemlock.

**Overthrow of the Thirty, 403 B.C.** But the rule of the Thirty was near its end. Thrasybulus, with a band of democratic exiles who had gathered in Thebes, occupied the strong



fort of Phyle in the passes of Mt Parnes on the northern frontier. The Thirty tried to dislodge him but were repulsed, and a blockading force was routed. Presently Thrasybulus, whose numbers had rapidly grown to a thousand, occupied the Peiræus by night and took up his position on the steep slope of Munychia. In the morning Critias led the Three Thousand, supported by the Spartan garrison, against the democrats. But their numbers were of no use along the narrow road, and the missiles rained down from above upon their crowded ranks. They were forced back and retired, leaving Critias and seventy others dead upon the slope. Then they withdrew to Eleusis, which they had already prepared as a refuge by killing off all democrats. A few days later Lysander arrived with an army and a fleet, prepared to support the oligarchs. But the ephors were growing suspicious of his arrogant behaviour, and sent out King Pausanias to supersede him. Pausanias had no love either for Lysander's schemes or for tyrants. With great tact and moderation he set to work to bring about a reconciliation between the parties, and owing to his efforts it was agreed that the past should be forgiven and forgotten for all except the Thirty and their immediate accomplices. As long as they continued to live at Eleusis they should be safe. At Athens the exiles and the democracy were restored, and the democratic constitution received its final shape.

**Socrates** Four years later the Athenians put to death the greatest of their citizens. For more than forty years the figure of the philosopher Socrates had been one of the most familiar sights of the city. Professing to know nothing himself, though styled by the Delphic oracle as the wisest of men, he haunted the Agora, the streets, and the gymnasia, conversing with any that he might meet, and, under the pretext of seeking knowledge for himself, trying to make men think. Popular he never was, for he thought that he had a divine mission to go about exposing ignorance and sham, and many a conceited man had suffered public humiliation through his acute and searching questions. He had no respect for any existing institution as such. All ideas must

be brought to the great test of examination to find out what is the truth. Men glibly talk of being patriotic, just, and brave. Yes, but what is patriotism, what is justice, what is bravery? Few think what they mean by the words that they commonly use.

With his ugly face and peculiar personal habits, Socrates was sure to be a butt for the comic poets. Aristophanes, a true Conservative to whom everything of the olden days was good, had attacked him bitterly in the *Clouds*, representing him as engaged in astronomical studies, encouraging disbelief in the gods, and teaching for pay how to make the unjust cause appear the better. These three charges were all unfair, but they represented no doubt the common opinion about Socrates and his teaching.

In the sixth century, just before the Persian wars, there had sprung up in Ionia a school of wise men who were not content to accept the world as it is, but wished to find out how the universe came into being and what is the guiding spirit that moves it. In other words, they were the earliest natural scientists and philosophers. Naturally the old stories about gods, living, loving, and fighting like men, were rejected by such inquirers. But to the old-fashioned and the ignorant it was wicked and impious to teach strange ideas to the young. In reality Socrates himself thought little of scientific inquiry, and he was a deeply religious man, for to him God was a spirit and men must accept Him in faith.

Secondly, in the latter half of the fifth century there had arisen a class of men known as "Sophists", or "Professors", who lectured for high fees and undertook to teach men any and every form of knowledge and, in particular, the art of speaking in public. These men, most of them not Athenians, were looked upon by the mass of the people as professing to teach anything to the wealthy for money, and as tending to make rich young men idle and eager to waste their time in subtle arguments. Socrates was naturally regarded as a Sophist, in spite of the fact that he did not teach for pay. Indeed he strenuously denied that he could teach at all, he

merely tried to make men think what they were doing and form their conduct in life according to reason instead of pre-judice

Another reason for Socrates' unpopularity is to be found in the fact that, though he loyally discharged his duties to the state, yet he was never afraid of criticising his country's institutions, and he had a wider view of life and could look, beyond Athens and Greece, upon man as the brother of all men and a citizen of the world. This was interpreted as a lack of patriotism, and it was unfortunate for him that among his admirers and followers were Xenophon the historian, who joined the Spartans, Plato the philosopher, who thought other cities as good as his own, and, above all, Alcibiades and Critias, who had wrought so much evil for their country.

The trial of Socrates, 399 B.C. Having bored some and humiliated others, regarded as a teacher of new-fangled ideas and atheism, and suspected as one who led young men astray, it is not surprising that Socrates seemed to the restored democracy to have exerted an evil influence upon his country in its troubles. He was accordingly accused of impiety and of corrupting young men. Instead of leaving the country as all men expected, he faced his trial before a court of 501 judges. There he explained his life and actions in a speech the substance of which Plato has preserved to us as *The Apology of Socrates*. He was found guilty by a majority of 60 votes. The penalty proposed by the accuser was death. Socrates at first refused to treat the matter seriously, and made a counter-proposal that he should be maintained in the Prytaneum at the public expense as a benefactor of the state. Eventually, at the urging of his friends, who guaranteed the money, he suggested a fine of half a talent<sup>1</sup>. The judges, bound by law to take one of the two proposals, fixed upon the death-sentence. A month later Socrates, refusing to escape as he easily might have done, drank the hemlock in prison, cheerful among his weeping friends. "Death is either a state of nothingness or a change of the soul from this world to



Socrates



another Wherefore be of good cheer, and be assured that no harm can happen to a good man either in life or after death The hour of departure has come; we go our ways, I to die and you to live Which is better, God only knows "

Lysander. We must now turn our attention to Lysander and the Spartans What happened to Athens was typical of the state of affairs in the cities which had been freed from the Athenian yoke The Spartan government may have had ideas that all cities should now be free, but Lysander thought otherwise It soon became evident that he was organising a Spartan empire with a personal end in view Success had turned his head, and his ambition knew no bounds He hoped to secure his position as admiral for life, in short to be the emperor Athens he treated in arrogant and haughty fashion, the other cities found that they fared no better. In all of them he had altered the form of government to oligarchy and set up "decarchies", boards of ten citizens, who would govern in their own and the Spartan interest. To support them, as at Athens, he had introduced Spartan har-mots and Lacedaemonian garrisons Harmost and decarchy, the one played into the other's hand Few Spartans could resist a bribe, and the governor was then blind to the misdeeds of the oligarchs Athens had levied contributions from her allies to the amount of 600 talents<sup>1</sup> The same cities, now free, paid 1000 talents<sup>2</sup> a year to the Spartan treasury. Athens had as an excuse for her empire the Confederacy of Delos, and she had championed the cause of Hellas against the barbarian. Lysander had ended the war through Persian gold, and in return permitted his friend Cyrus to resume possession of many a Greek city upon the Asiatic coast Such was his idea of liberty for the Greeks! Bitterly did the towns of the Aegean rue the day when they had revolted from Athens

Disgrace of Lysander. But at length Lysander's despotic and arbitrary conduct roused the ephors to recall him home, and he was reduced to the rank of a private citizen His system of empire, however, was still kept up.

<sup>1</sup> £144,000

<sup>2</sup> £240,000

Thwarted in his designs, he now tried to rule in another way. When king Agis died, he used all his influence to keep out the late king's son, about whose birth ugly stories were told, and procured instead the election of Agis' brother, Agesilaus. The new king was lame and short and of unusually modest, gentle, and humane disposition. Lysander hoped to use him as a tool and really rule the state himself. Events were to show his grievous mistake. Agesilaus proved himself the most vigorous king that Sparta had seen for a hundred years. His opportunity arose in this way.

The "Anabasis", 401 B.C. In 404 B.C. the king of Persia died, leaving his throne to Artaxerxes, his elder son. But Cyrus, the younger son, had, with his mother's help, long been intriguing to get the throne. Cyrus was an accurate judge of men. He knew the weakness of the Persian empire and the bad qualities of Oriental troops, he had also learnt, from his dealings with Lysander, the excellence of the Greek hoplite as a fighting machine. Resolved to expel his brother from the throne, he collected a force of some 100,000 Asiatics, and, by offers of high pay, attracted 13,000 Greeks to follow him. The Greek mercenaries were recruited by Clearchus, once a Spartan harmost in Byzantium, and included in their ranks a number of Lacedaemonian troops.

Knowing that the Greeks would be alarmed at the thought of the distance to be covered and the might of the Great King, Cyrus kept his goal a secret from all except Clearchus, and gave out that he was going to march against the troublesome highlanders of Mt Taurus. The story of his march up country, the *Anabasis*, and of the subsequent retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks, has been vividly told by Xenophon, the Athenian, who was one of the mercenary soldiers (see Map 14). The march was at first directed towards the mountains, as given out, but presently the force turned aside from its route and marched towards the Cilician Gates, the chief pass which leads through Mt Taurus to the East. The Greeks now knew that they had been deceived, and were with difficulty induced to proceed as if to attack an enemy of Cyrus.

upon the Euphrates At last Thapsacus on the Euphrates was reached, and Cyrus revealed the true object of the expedition It was too late to turn back, and generous offers were made if they would advance So they crossed the river and marched along the northern bank

**Battle of Cunaxa** At Cunaxa, not far from Babylon, they were met by Artaxerxes at the head of a huge, unwieldy host In the battle that ensued, the Greeks on the right drove the enemy before them in panic, in the centre Cyrus himself with 600 horse charged and put to flight the royal bodyguard of 6000 men, but, catching sight of his brother in the fray, he let his passion outrun his discretion Dashing at him almost single-handed, he wounded Artaxerxes with a javelin, but was himself struck down and slain Meanwhile on the left the Asiatic forces of Cyrus were put to flight

**Retreat of the Ten Thousand** The Greeks were now utterly stranded, they had no longer any reason to fight, but they could not find their way home, and were without provisions They refused to surrender, and Artaxerxes, only too anxious to be quit of them, sent Tissaphernes to act as a guide The latter led them across the Tigris and up its course northwards, till they were close to the site of Nineveh under the mountains of Armenia Then he invited Clearchus and the leading officers to a conference and treacherously slew them, hoping that the rest, now they were leaderless, would at once surrender

But, though they were 1000 miles from the Aegean and ignorant of their whereabouts, the Ten Thousand elected fresh officers, among them Xenophon, and determined to find their own way home Harassed by Tissaphernes in the plains, they plunged boldly into the unknown mountains Week after week, suffering from hunger and the winter's cold and ever worried by the fierce attacks of hostile highlanders, they pushed on, till at length a cry arose, "The sea, the sea!" It was indeed the sea, the most familiar sight to a Greek, and they felt themselves within reach of home A few days' march brought them to Trapezus, a Greek colony on the Black Sea



coast But the unexpected presence of a compact body of 10,000 veterans was not welcome to any Greek cities, and it was only after many delays and disappointments that, partly by land and partly by sea, they at length reached the Bosphorus

This ever memorable march had a double effect In the first place it was a revelation of what a small army of Greeks by their discipline, pluck, and endurance could do against the vast numbers and distances of the hitherto terrible Persian empire Secondly the support given by Greeks, and especially by Sparta, to Cyrus' revolt made a quarrel with Artaxerxes inevitable Tissaphernes was sent to Sardis to resume control of his old satrapy, and he at once proceeded to subdue the Greek towns of Asia Minor Thus war between Sparta and Persia began

Agesilaus in Asia, 397—394 B C It was in the year 399 B C that a special force was sent to save the Greek towns But such was the growing dissatisfaction with Spartan government that few of the towns in Ionia responded to the call for troops, and it was only by enrolling the remnant of Xenophon's Ten Thousand that an adequate army was raised The first Spartan commander was a feeble officer of no ability, the second achieved some measure of success in Aeolis, and forced Pharnabazus to make peace and Tissaphernes to negotiate But in 397 B C, owing to Lysander's influence, the new king, Agesilaus, was sent to take over the command Lysander was to accompany him at the head of a council of advisers, and large reinforcements were to be raised

The ephors now received an ominous warning of the true state of affairs Shortly before, a dangerous conspiracy of Perioeci, Helots, and the inferior citizens, headed by a man named Cinadon, had been crushed only just in time Now Athens and Corinth alleged excuses for not supplying their contingents, and Thebes flatly refused to send any aid Worse than that, while Agesilaus was sacrificing at Aulis in Boeotia, in imitation of the action of Agamemnon as he was starting for Troy, some Theban cavalry rode up and interrupted the

sacrifice. It is not surprising that for the future the king bore a grudge against the Thebans

When Agesilaus reached Asia, he soon showed that his insignificant exterior concealed a spirit of vigour and ability. The first to be disillusioned was his friend Lysander, tried to resume the despotic part which he had played upon that stage before, and surrounded himself with a court of fawning flatterers. But he soon found out his mistake. Agesilaus quietly ignored his requests and his advice, till at length he begged and obtained an independent command, where his humiliation would not be so conspicuous.

The king now showed his real ambitions. He had no desire for wealth or glory for himself, but, taking to heart the true lesson of the "Anabasis", he conceived the idea of driving the Persians out of Asia Minor. Working from his headquarters at Ephesus, he attacked Pharnabazus in Phrygia, drove him from his capital, and secured vast spoils. Tissaphernes at Sardis next felt his vigour, and was so constantly defeated that Artaxerxes suspected his loyalty and had the shifty satrap executed. Tithraustes, his successor, concluded an armistice for six months. In the interval Agesilaus again attacked Phrygia and overran the country, but, struck by the chivalry and honesty of Pharnabazus, with whom he had a personal interview, he promised to leave that satrapy alone while he had other foes against whom to turn his arms. His success attracted the Ionians to join him, and soon he had a force of 20,000 men. The ephors permitted him to raise a fleet also, and he was able to place his brother-in-law, Peisander, in command of 120 ships. He was in the midst of his preparations for a march into the very heart of the Persian empire, when he was suddenly recalled by serious news from home.

The Corinthian war. Tithraustes had discovered an ingenious means of drawing off Spartan attacks from himself. He had sent a Rhodian named Timocrates with 50 talents<sup>1</sup>, to be used at his discretion in the chief Greek towns which were

<sup>1</sup> £12,000

unfriendly to Sparta. His gold, aided by the general discontent, brought matters to a head. Ismenias of Thebes ascertained that Argos and Corinth would be ready to assist, and concluded an alliance with Athens against the tyrant. The Locrians were then persuaded to attack Phocis, and the Thebans gave their assistance. Thus began what is called the "Corinthian war."

**Death of Lysander at Haliartus, 395 B.C.** Phocis appealed to Sparta, and Pausanias promptly invaded Boeotia from the south, while Lysander was sent across the Corinthian Gulf to attack it from the north-west and join hands with the king. Lysander reached Haliartus, which guards the narrows of the plain between Lake Copais and Mt. Helicon, and laid siege to the town. Unexpectedly he was caught between a sortie from within and the attack of a large Theban relieving force. His troops were scattered, and he himself was slain. Next day Pausanias arrived, and, in order to recover and bury the corpse, was forced to make a truce and evacuate Boeotia.

**Battle of Corinth.** Argos and Corinth now openly joined the opposition, and in the spring a strong allied force assembled at Corinth for an attack upon Sparta herself. The Lacedaemonians arrived and offered battle at once. As so often happened in Greek battles, each right wing won, but the allies lost twice as many as their foes and acknowledged their defeat. Yet there was nothing decisive about the fight. The proposed invasion of Laconia was indeed stopped, but the Lacedaemonians were blocked at the Isthmus.

**Battle of Coroneia, 394 B.C.** Meanwhile Agesilaus had received urgent messages to return at once, and, with the greater part of his force, he was hurrying home by land. In spite of the hostility of Thessaly he forced his way through, and reached Boeotia about a month after the battle of Corinth. At Coroneia, not far from Haliartus, he found the allies waiting to receive him. The two armies advanced in silence till they were within 200 yards of one another, then with a shout they charged at the double. On the right the heavy mass of Theban infantry crashed through the enemy's ranks

and reached the camp behind, but, seeing that the Argives on the other wing had fled from the attack of Agesilaus himself to the slopes of Mt Helicon, they wheeled to cut their way through to their allies. The crash was terrific, shield to shield, and sword to sword. Agesilaus himself was wounded, thrown down, and trampled underfoot. At last the Thebans forced their way through, leaving many dead upon the ground. Next day they asked for a truce and the corpses, thus acknowledging defeat. But though Agesilaus was nominally the victor and set up a trophy, he dared not try to force his way over the Isthmus. He turned aside to Delphi, and thence reached home across the Gulf. Thus on land Sparta barely held her own.

**Battle of Cnidus, 394 B.C.** But, the night before the battle of Coroneia, Agesilaus had heard the evil news that Peisander had been defeated and slain. Conon, who had been in Cyprus since Aegospotami, had received from Persia the command of a Phoenician fleet. Joining hands with Pharnabazus he met the Lacedaemonian fleet off Cnidus, at the south-western corner of Asia Minor. Peisander fought bravely enough, though outnumbered, but his ship was forced to land and he was slain fighting, his Ionian allies deserted him without striking a blow, and half of his fleet was taken or sunk. Spartan supremacy was lost.

**Conon rebuilds the Long Walls.** The victors then sailed from town to town, and every place except Abydos opened its gates and expelled its Spartan harmost. Next year they crossed the Aegean and ravaged the Laconian coast. Pharnabazus even supplied money and allowed Conon to employ the seamen in helping to rebuild the Long Walls of Athens and the fortifications of the Peiraeus, and two years later Athens had grown strong enough to send out a fleet of warships.

**Iphicrates.** For the next six years the war dragged on. Sparta's efforts were devoted to breaking the barrier at Corinth, and this she just managed to do by capturing and holding the Corinthian port of Lechaenum. But her troops

received at least one damaging reverse. A regiment of hoplites was attacked by the light-armed mercenaries of the Athenian general, Iphicrates. This officer had trained the "peltasts", as they were called, and armed them with formidable spear and sword without cumbering them with heavy defensive armour. He then caught the Lacedaemonians, slew half of them, and put the rest to flight, as great a blow to Spartan prestige as it was glory to himself.

**The Peace of Antalcidas, 386 B.C.** Meanwhile in Asia Minor there was little cause left for hostilities between Sparta and Persia, since Sparta had lost her foothold in those parts. A Lacedaemonian officer named Antalcidas was sent to see what could be done to gain peace and Persian help once more. While the protracted negotiations were going on, a Lacedaemonian force appeared and seized Ephesus, but the Athenians had so far recovered their strength that Thrasybulus could bring out an Athenian squadron and unite Rhodes, Chalcedon, and Byzantium in a new league. At last the Persian answer came back. The Great King was willing to make an alliance with Sparta and help to enforce peace among the Greek states, if he were paid a proper price. All were weary of the struggle, none could hope to resist Sparta and Persia combined. In 386 B.C. envoys from the various belligerent states met at Sparta to hear the terms of peace arranged by Antalcidas with the Persians. The King's letter ran as follows—"King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia should be his, and, of the islands, Clazomenae and Cyprus, while the rest of the Greek cities great and small go free, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros. These, as of old, are to be Athenian. Whatever parties will not accept this peace, upon them will I and all consenting states make war, by sea and land, with ships and money." To these terms almost all the envoys agreed. The only ones who objected were the Thebans. They wished to sign on behalf of the Boeotian League. Agesilaus, however, by threatening invasion, induced them too to sign. So, in order to purchase Persian help that she might dissolve the hostile league and bolster up her own

failing authority, Sparta was willing to sell the Greeks of Asia to the barbarians and admit the Great King as the arbiter of Greek affairs. And all the other states of Hellas ingloriously gave their consent.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Compare the conduct of the Athenians and that of the Spartans during their respective supremacies
- 4 Would you, as an ordinary Athenian, have voted for the condemnation of Socrates?
- 5 In what respect was he a revolutionary?
- 6 Was Sparta justified in seeking Persian help?

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FALL OF SPARTAN SUPREMACY

**Result of the Peace of Antalcidas** There was no doubt that of the Greek states Sparta gained most by the Peace of Antalcidas. All leagues were broken up. Athens of course controlled Attica, for all its free inhabitants were her citizens, but her confederacy with Byzantium and Rhodes was dissolved. Thebes too was forced to lose her hold over her neighbours and abandon the Boeotian League. Argos and Corinth, which had combined into one state, now separated. But Sparta's own position as head of the Peloponnesian confederacy was untouched. It had never been a political, but only a military leadership, and in the Spartan view it might lawfully be maintained. Spartan dominion over the Laconian towns Agesilaus and the ephors refused to consider.

**Selfishness of Sparta.** A change had come over Agesilaus himself. In his earlier years he had appeared not

so much a Spartan king as a Pan-Hellenic champion against the forces of the East. But the hostility of the other states, and especially of Thebes, had crushed his wider aims and thrust him back into the narrow position of a Lacedaemonian leader. He did not like the idea of Antalcidas' intrigue with Persia, but, having once swallowed the bitter pill, he was prepared to use the peace to the utmost for Sparta's advantage and to condone in future any dishonourable action, if only it was to the interest of his city. The first state to suffer from Spartan interference was Mantinea in Arcadia: the walls were pulled down, the city was split into four open villages, and oligarchies friendly to Sparta were set up. Next the little town of Phlius was forced to receive back its exiles and an oligarchic government. Sparta then determined to assert her position as the interpreter of the King's peace in a more distant quarter.

Sparta and Olynthus, 382—379 B.C. Ever since the time of Brasidas the towns of Chalcidice had remained independent and friendly towards the Lacedaemonian name. Olynthus was one of the principal towns, and, lying further inland than the rest, was more exposed to the attacks of the kings of Macedonia. She had accordingly established a powerful league of the cities of the district under her leadership. Acanthus and Apollonia, however, did not wish to forfeit their independent action by joining, and now appealed to Sparta for help to dissolve the league. They represented that their opponents were already in negotiation with Athens and Thebes, and that it would be wise, as well as being in accordance with the terms of the King's peace, to check the confederacy at once. Opinion at Sparta was divided, but Agesilaus and the aggressive party carried the day. A Lacedaemonian force was sent, and after three years of stubborn resistance Olynthus was captured and the league was broken up. Greece was, not many years later, to regret the day, for the one powerful check upon Macedonian power was thus removed.

Seizure of the Cadmeia, 382 B.C. While one of the

Lacedaemonian contingents was marching through Boeotia northwards to Olynthus, an event happened which was to bring about the downfall of Sparta. Phoebidas, the officer in command, was visited by night by Leontiadas, the leader of the Theban oligarchs. This man was one of the magistrates, or "polemarchs" as they were called, and was anxious to crush his democratic colleague, Ismenias, at any price. He suggested that he himself should open the gates next day at noon, when, owing to the heat, the streets would be empty and the citadel, the Cadmeia, would be cleared of men for a women's festival to be held. Phoebidas at once accepted the treacherous offer, though Thebes and Sparta were at peace. The plan was carried out. The Thebans were taken absolutely unawares, and without any opposition the Spartans got possession of the citadel and the women. The people could do nothing but submit. Ismenias was arrested, and 300 of his adherents fled to Athens for safety.

It was thought in Greece that Sparta would disown the shameful act, and the ephors and public opinion by no means approved of this deed. Agesilaus, however, defended Phoebidas. What he had done was to the advantage of Sparta, and that was enough. He was therefore only fined, and the Lacedaemonians put Ismenias to death and retained their hold upon Thebes. To outward appearance Spartan supremacy was assured, but the religious Greek mind saw in the subsequent disasters the just retribution of the gods.

**Liberation of Thebes, 379 B.C.** Three years later came the first blow. Leontiadas was now a private citizen, but his friends, Archias and Philippus, were polemarchs, and had filled the prison with their enemies. Their secretary, Phyllidas, arranged with the exiles in Athens a plot to assassinate the oligarchs and liberate the city from the Spartan yoke. Accordingly one winter evening seven daring men, headed by Pelopidas, entered the city unperceived as if returning from hunting. That night and the next day they lay hid in the house of a man named Charon. When the evening came, Phyllidas gave a banquet to the polemarchs, having promised



to introduce afterwards some of the most beautiful women in Thebes. A rumour reached Archias that a plot was afoot, and to the horror of the conspirators he sent for Chæron: but his suspicions were allayed without difficulty. Later on he received an urgent letter from Athens giving full details of the plot, but he was drunk by that time, and, thrusting the letter unopened beneath the cushion, he cried "Urgent business to-morrow." Presently the servants retired, and the "women" were introduced, wearing heavy veils. As the drunken polemarchs attempted to tear them off, daggers flashed in the air and were buried in their hearts. Then three of the conspirators went to the house of Leontiadas, pretending to bring a message from Archias. He was alone with his wife, but seizing a sword he defended himself gallantly till Pelopidas cut him down. The next step was to go to the prison on the pretext of bringing a prisoner. The moment the door was opened, an entry was forced, the gaoler slain, and the prisoners liberated. Meantime a message was sent to the rest of the exiles and to some Athenian troops which were waiting on the frontier. The people too were summoned to arms, and at dawn an attack was made upon the Spartan garrison in the Cadmeia. The defence was feeble, and soon the harmost surrendered on condition of being allowed to march out. It is not surprising that, on his return home, the Spartans put him to death.

The instant they heard the news of the revolt, the ephors declared war on Thebes and despatched King Cleombrotus to relieve the garrison. At Megara he met it retiring but he advanced close to Thebes, and then after waiting a fortnight, ingloriously withdrew, leaving an officer named Sphodrias to guard the friendly town of Thespiæ. The next two years Agesilaus took the field, but, though he ravaged Theban territory, the best of the Spartan generals could do nothing more.

Pelopidas and Epameinondas. At this critical moment Thebes was fortunate in producing two of her greatest citizens Pelopidas, who took part in the conspiracy, was a wealthy

Theban of good family A generous friend and a zealous, unselfish colleague, possessed of great strength, unusual military genius, and infinite daring, he was the idol of the Theban troops and people His dearest friend was Epameinondas, a modest, unassuming man, whom the crisis forced to show himself one of the most brilliant men of Greece To his statesmanship and military ability Epameinondas added humanity, honesty, honour, and a pure patriotism which placed him above reproach Though of noble family, he was born poor, he refused to share the wealth which his friend's generosity offered him; and, in spite of his success as conqueror, he remained poor to his death He would have nothing to do with assassination or revenge, but, when Thebes was freed, he came out from the philosophical retirement which he loved, to help the cause of his country Under the guidance of these two great men Thebes defied the Spartan invasions, and even defeated a superior Lacedaemonian force at Tegyra She reorganised her army and re-established the Boeotian League, of which she was the head

The raid of Sphodrias We must now turn to Athenian affairs We have seen how Athenian troops went to the assistance of Thebes when she revolted from Sparta Yet these had not been officially sent When Cleombrotus was in Boeotia, the Athenians had been alarmed, had hastily disavowed the action of the generals, and had even put one of them to death Thus Spartan remonstrances were satisfied But Sphodrias, who had been left behind at Thespieae, conceived the idea of copying the exploit of Phoebeidas By a hasty night march he hoped to gain possession of the Peiraeus Intention and execution were equally bad Daylight came while he was still near Eleusis, and his scheme was foiled but stood revealed Angry at his failure, he ravaged the land as he retired The Athenians were justly indignant and protested at Sparta, and their indignation was lashed to fury when the influence of Agesilaus procured Sphodrias' acquittal at his trial At once they formally entered into an alliance with Thebes

**The second Athenian confederacy** The Athenians now set to work to organise another confederacy. This time not Persia but Sparta was the object at which they aimed. Already before 386 B.C. connections had been formed with Chios, Byzantium, Rhodes, and other towns, but the terms of the Peace of Antalcidas had arrested any development of a formal league. Now the alliance took a more definite shape, under the lead of the statesman Callistratus and the three active officers who raised Athenian prestige once more, Timotheus, son of Conon, Chabrias, and Iphicrates. The inscription which records the formation of the league has been preserved. The Athenians were careful to disarm the suspicion which their treatment of the Confederacy of Delos had aroused. Greek or barbarian, as long as they were not subjects of Persia, all were invited to throw off the Spartan yoke. Athens was to be the one party, the rest of the allies formed the other party to the alliance, neither could act without the other's consent. The objectionable word "tribute"<sup>1</sup> was omitted, and "contribution"<sup>2</sup> was used instead. Absolute independence of government was to prevail, no Athenian garrisons were allowed, and no Athenian might even hold property in an allied state. Some seventy members were won over to the alliance, among the names being even those of Thebes, of Alcetas, king of Epirus, and of Jason, the prince of the Thessalian town of Pherae. But the confederacy did not achieve much or hold together for long, for, when once the power of Sparta was broken, the reason for its existence ceased. The wiser men in Athens, such as Callistratus, the statesman, and Isocrates, the professor of oratory, discouraged any attempt to recover political supremacy, and devoted themselves to making Athens supreme, the one in commerce, the other in thought and literature.

**Battle of Naxos, 376 B.C.** The first great Athenian success was won in the Aegean. A Lacedaemonian fleet of sixty ships under Pollis tried the scheme which had proved so useful before. Waiting near Cape Sunium at the end of

<sup>1</sup> φόρος<sup>2</sup> συνταξίς

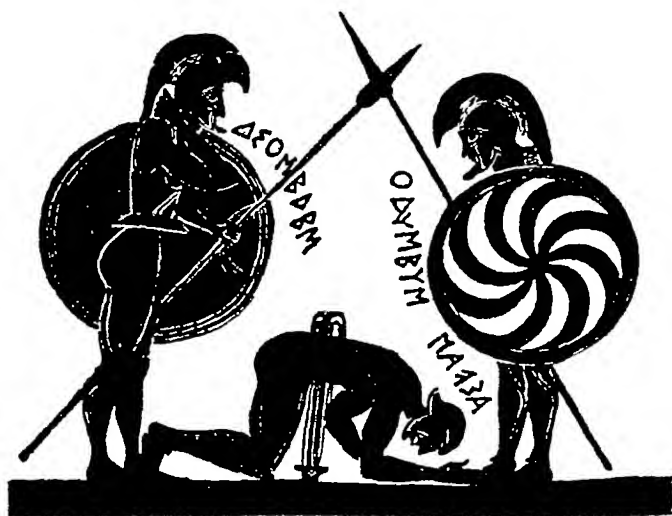
Attica, it prevented the corn ships from coming in. Athenian naval power, however, had so much revived that Chabrias was able to sail out with eighty triremes to clear away the enemy. He met Pollis near the island of Naxos, and so complete was his victory that only eleven of the hostile ships escaped.

**The Athenians in Western Greece.** Next year Timotheus was sent round the Peloponnese with the first Athenian fleet that had been seen in those waters for many a year, and was successful in bringing over Corcyra and Epirus, among other places, to the new confederacy, in a second expedition he sailed to Northern Greece and won Jason of Pherae as an ally. The Spartans in their turn tried to gain Corcyra and were at first successful, but they were beaten back by the islanders, and the arrival of the Athenian fleet under Iphicrates and Callistratus proved the strength of Athenian power once more.

**Peace of Callias, 371 B.C.** Sparta was now alarmed and ready for peace. Athens was growing jealous of the rising power of Thebes, and Callistratus, feeling that the balance of power was restored, was anxious to come to terms. The first attempt to end the war proved abortive. But three years later a congress was held at Sparta and a peace was agreed upon, known as the "Peace of Callias." The basis of it was that all cities should be free. But the same obstacle arose as before. Sparta signed for herself and her allies. Athens and her allies signed separately, Thebes among the number signing in her own name. Next day Epameinondas and the other Theban delegates wished to alter the signature to stand in the name of the Boeotian League. Agesilaus got angry and refused to make any change. "Will you leave each of the Boeotian towns independent?" he cried. "Will you leave each of the Laconian towns independent?" retorted Epameinondas. Thereupon Agesilaus in his rage scratched out the name of the Thebans from the treaty.

**Spartan invasion of Boeotia.** At once King Cleombrotus, who was in Phocis, was ordered to invade Boeotia with the 11,000 men whom he had with him. The Thebans

and Boeotians, considerably inferior in numbers, posted themselves near Coroneia to bar his way. Cleombrotus, however, marched round them over the hills, and captured the Boeotian port of Creusis and a Theban squadron of ships, thus securing his rear. Then he advanced towards Thebes and encamped upon some rising ground near the village of Leuctra. Meantime the Boeotians had come back to bar his way, and they drew up their forces on a line of low hills opposite him. Epameinondas, one of the "Boeotarchs", or officials of the League, was in command, and, supported by Pelopidas, ordered



*Mus. Napoléon, 66.*

FIG 5 THE SUICIDE OF AJAX

This figure shows the armour and weapons of a Greek hoplite

instant action. It was well for Thebes that she had two such men.

**Greek warfare on land.** In few things were the Greeks more conservative than in military affairs. From time immemorial battles had been conducted in one way. The armies came out to meet one another and drew up in line 8 or 12 deep, a mile or less apart. Attention was paid to the hoplites only, few cities had any considerable force of cavalry, the light-armed troops were left to themselves. When the line

was formed, it advanced singing the "paean", or battle-chant, to within 300 or 200 yards, and then charged at the double. The best troops were placed on the right, the post of honour, and usually inclined somewhat to the right unconsciously as they brought the shield on the left arm to cover the body. Thus they generally outflanked the hostile left and defeated it. The final result of the battle was determined by the victorious wings wheeling to the left, and that which was in least confusion gained the victory. When the enemy were defeated, little attempt was made to follow up the advantage and deal a decisive blow. The losers sent a herald to ask for the dead under a truce, the winners set up a trophy, and both went home. Such was the normal Greek battle. There was little variation in tactics, and strategy was practically unknown. An ambush was hardly ever laid, there was rarely an attempt to turn a position, there was no attack upon supplies or communications, and a routed army was not pursued.

**Reforms of Epameinondas** But the genius of Epameinondas was not fettered by tradition. Apparently it was a Theban custom to draw up the troops at least twice the usual Greek depth. He now massed the Thebans 50 deep, and placed them on the left, not on the right. Amongst them was Pelopidas with a picked body of 300 troops, 150 pairs of friends, known as the Sacred Band. The centre and the right, composed of other Boeotians drawn up only 8 deep, were kept back so that they would not come into action till after the Thebans had charged. Thus the best of his troops would charge the best of the enemy, and by sheer weight of the "phalanx", as the compact body of men was called, would crush through their line. The Spartans themselves defeated, it was not likely that their allies would stand, and the doubtful Boeotian centre and right need not come into action.

**Battle of Leuctra, 371 B.C.** All fell out as he intended. The excellent Theban cavalry on the left opened the fight and drove back the ill-trained Lacedaemonian horse upon its infantry. The heavy phalanx of the Thebans then charged

and crashed into the enemy's ranks Cleombrotus was one of the first to fall, yet the Spartans would not give way They stretched beyond the narrow Theban front and attempted to take them in the flank, but this was prevented by the Sacred Band, which had been specially detailed to hold the most dangerous place However, the weight of men and armour began to tell, thrusting with sword and shoving with shield, the Thebans made one mighty effort and burst through the hostile line The fight had not raged for long, and the centre and other wing were not yet engaged, but there dead on the field lay 600 of the Perioeci, 400 of the 700 true Spartans present, and a Spartan king The other Peloponnesians, seeing the disaster, made no attempt to fight, and the force fell back to its camp and acknowledged defeat in the usual way by asking for the bodies of the slain

The effect of the battle Thus in the space of a few minutes was a Lacedaemonian army beaten by a far inferior force in fair fight, and Spartan supremacy and military prestige lay shattered in the dust Apart from the loss of reputation, the death of so many of her citizens was a serious blow to Sparta At the time of the Persian invasion the number of Spartans with full rights was about 8000, but the continual wars in which they were engaged had so reduced the population that in 371 B.C. there were only 1500 left Of these there had fallen 400, and the very existence of Sparta, a military camp in a hostile country, was threatened

Behaviour of the Spartans Yet never did the Spartan character bear itself so nobly The disastrous news arrived on the last day of a great festival The ephors ordered the celebration to proceed, published the names of the fallen, and forbade lamentation Next morning the relatives of the dead appeared with smiling faces in the streets, while the friends of the survivors slunk along the byways, frowning and ashamed Every available man was called out instantly under the command of Archidamus, for Agesilaus, his father, was too sick to go, allied contingents were picked up on the way, and the relieving force marched in all haste, till near Megara it met

the beaten army retiring under a truce Then all came back together and dispersed to their homes

SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Did the Spartans deserve to fall?
- 4 Criticise Greek military methods
- 5 What do you think of Agesilaus?
- 6 Draw a plan of the battle of Leuctra

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE THEBAN SUPREMACY

**Thessaly** From the heroic age until the fourth century Thessaly had taken practically no part in the affairs of Greece The plain was large, fertile, and populous, but except for raids upon the Phocians at Thermopylae and the occasional appearance of Thessalian cavalry as untrustworthy allies, little was known of the doings of its inhabitants The country was divided among a number of towns ruled by great families, or "dynasties", such as the Aleuadae of Larissa The mass of the free population were in opposition to them, but their only bond of union was a shadowy league which was revived from time to time when military necessities caused them to choose a "tagus", or commander-in-chief For the most part the nobles, relying on their mounted retainers and their rich estates cultivated by serfs, "penestae" as they were called, maintained their supremacy At the time of the Persian wars the Aleuadae had "medised", but the people only joined the invader when they were left in the lurch by the southern Greeks. Afterwards the Thessalians had remained more or less passive spectators of the quarrels which distracted the other states



Jason of Pherae, 380?—370 B.C. About 406 B.C. a democratic rising, fomented by Athens, took place, and two years later Lycophron of Pherae, taking advantage of the popular movement, established himself as tyrant in that town and as champion of Thessalian democracy. We know very little of what he did, but thirty years later his son Jason appeared as the "tagus" of the Thessalian league. Simple in his tastes, though magnificent in his hospitality, he was a man of extraordinary physical strength and untiring activity. He was conspicuous for his frankness, justice, humanity, and moderation, and he won allies no less by his own attractive personality than by his military power. He preferred peaceful persuasion to other means, where that was unsuccessful, a bribe was often found effective, the final appeal to force was not often employed, but it never failed. The basis of his power was a force of 6000 mercenaries, horse and foot, and a Pheraeian cavalry corps. These formed a permanent standing army, drilled and armed on lines of his own and led by Jason himself. Besides them, as "tagus" he could summon from the rest of Thessaly 8000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, and a multitude of light-armed troops from the dependent mountaineers. The tribute of the subject tribes and the corn-supplies of Thessaly provided his resources. Pherae itself he surrounded with strong walls, and a circuit of four miles of masonry enclosed the neighbouring port of Pagasae, where he built his fleet. Thebes and Athens were amongst his allies, Pelopidas and Timotheus being close personal friends, and Alcetas of Epirus and Amyntas of Macedonia were dependent upon his will. A tyrant indeed he was. He used to say "he was hungry when he was not a tyrant, for he did not know how to be a private citizen." But his tyranny was of the best type, and even his foes laid no crimes to his charge. However, his avowed schemes extended beyond Northern Greece which he controlled. It was his intention to wrest some day from Athens the supremacy of the seas, and then at the head of united Hellas to conquer the Persian empire.

Jason's advice to the Thebans. Immediately after their victory at Leuctra the Thebans despatched envoys to the Athenians and to Jason, bidding them come to their help. The Athenians were by no means pleased to hear of a Theban success and gave a frigid reception to the messenger. Jason on the other hand at once manned his triremes as if to come by sea, but in fact with his mercenaries and Pheraean horse he marched rapidly into Boeotia before the hostile Phocians could stop him or even learn of his approach. When he arrived, he found the Lacedaemonians still entrenched in their camp and the Thebans anxious that he should join in an immediate attack. Jason, however, pointed out to the latter that the men were desperate and at bay, and that it would be foolish to risk losing victory in defeat, while he persuaded the Lacedaemonians that trouble might break out in the Peloponnese and that it would be better to retire under a truce. Thus the wily Thessalian left both parties grateful to him, and dependent upon him since he held the balance between the two. He then went back to Thessaly, ravaging Phocis on the way and destroying the fortifications of Heracleia, which barred the approach to Thermopylae from the north.

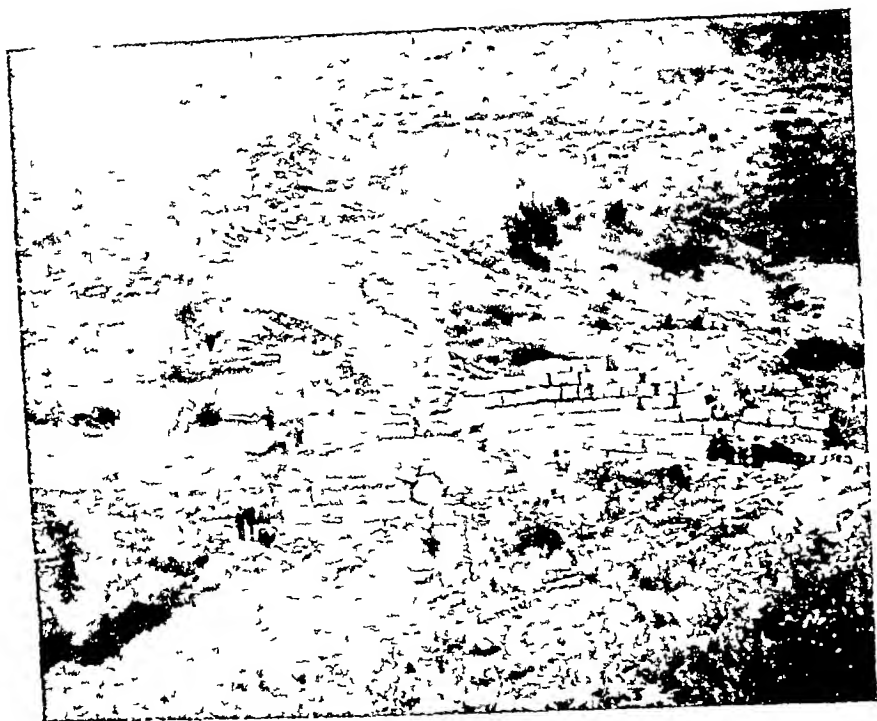
Jason prepares to celebrate the Pythian games. Jason was now at the zenith of his power. The states of Central Greece, not without reason, began to regard his fine words and friendly advances with suspicion. He thought the moment had come to make himself master of Hellas. Announcing that he would come in person to the Pythian games of 370 B.C. and offer such sacrifice to the Delphic god as had never before been made, he collected from the cities of Thessaly 1000 of the best-bred bulls and 10,000 sheep, swine, and goats. At the same time he sent orders for all the troops to be ready to take the field at the time of the games.

His death, 370 B.C. As he was on the point of departure, he held a final review of his own cavalry and then heard petitions which were made to him. Seven youths approached hotly quarrelling, as if about to appeal to him, then they drew

their daggers and plunged them into his body. Two of the assassins were caught, but five escaped on horseback and were received with honour throughout Greece as tyrannicides. Thus perished Jason in the prime of life and prosperity, the man who, had he lived, might have anticipated the work of Philip and Alexander of Macedon.

**Foundation of Megalopolis** Meanwhile the Peloponnese was in commotion, now that the ancient fear of Sparta was removed. Mantinea at once rebuilt its walls. But the most dangerous thing for Lacedaemonian supremacy was the union of the quarrelsome highlanders of Arcadia. For once they agreed to sink their differences and combine in an Arcadian league and the building of a capital, which they called Megalopolis, "the Great City." Nor were the Spartans strong enough to stop the work. This in itself was formidable enough, but what afterwards happened was worse.

**First expedition of Epameinondas to the Peloponnese, 370 B.C.** Late in the year 370 B.C. Epameinondas and Pelopidas, no longer detained by fear of Jason, determined to support the Arcadian movement. Corinth and a few other states remained loyal to Sparta, but the Argives, the Eleians, and the Arcadians joined the invaders when the Thebans and their allies came pouring into the Peloponnese. Agesilaus had ceased to try to interfere with Megalopolis, but with 70,000 men Epameinondas marched on into Laconia, burning and ravaging as he went. The Spartans were in desperate straits, the town was unwallled, there was fear of treachery within, the defenders were few, not within the memory of man had Sparta seen an enemy insulting her doors, and the women were seized with terror. But the old king rose to the occasion, every man was called out, the Helots were freed and armed, and barricades were hastily thrown up. The river Eurotas, swollen with rain, delayed the enemy, and, when at last they crossed it and reached the town, they found it too well guarded for them to risk forcing an entrance. So they ravaged all southern Laconia down to the sea, retraced their steps, and entered into Messenia.



Messene

(The wall and the Arcadian gate)



**Foundation of Messene, 369 B C** There the inhabitants joined with them, and a deadly blow was struck at Sparta by the founding of a new town of Messene on the slopes of the old stronghold of Mt Ithome. The descendants of the exiled Messenians were collected from every part, and not only did the Spartans lose their estates, but they found an inveterate foe planted in their very midst.

**Sparta begs for Athenian help** Spartan envoys meantime had gone to beg for Athenian help. This the Athenians, following their right policy of the balance of power, now gave, and Iphicrates was sent with a large force to the Peloponnese. Sparta, however, was saved, and Iphicrates made little attempt to stop the Thebans when lack of provisions forced them to return home.

**Second and third expeditions of Epameinondas, 368 and 367 B C** Little more than a year later Epameinondas again appeared in the Peloponnese. The Athenians and Spartans made an ineffectual attempt to stop him at the Isthmus, but he burst through. Yet, though Sicyon and one or two other towns friendly to Sparta were captured, the expedition was not a brilliant success. Nor did he fare much better in a third invasion in the next year. This time he marched against the towns of Achaea, which had hitherto remained neutral, and induced them to join the Theban alliance on condition that their own affairs should be left undisturbed. On his return home his policy was not approved, and he was not re-elected Boeotarch. He cared too much for Greece and not enough for Thebes, it was said. Instead, the Thebans put garrisons and governors of their own in the Achaean towns, and thereby incurred much unpopularity among their allies.

**The "Tearless Battle"** The Arcadians too, led by Lycomedes of Mantinea, were growing over-confident in their own prowess, and resented the presence of the Thebans, of whose support they thought they no longer stood in need. But their presumption received a sharp check when they were severely defeated by the Spartans in the "Tearless

Battle", in which the Lacedaemonians did not lose a single man. How great had been the strain at Sparta is shown by the fact that, when the news of this insignificant victory was received, the stern Agesilaus and the senate wept with joy and relief.

**Pelopidas in Thessaly, 368 B.C.** Though Pelopidas had shared the command and had won fame in the glorious success of the first invasion of the Peloponnese, yet the rest of his actions were concerned with Northern Greece. When his friend Epameinondas was absent, on his second expedition, he himself set out for Thessaly, thereby depriving the other army of troops which might have given it better success.

**Alexander of Pherae.** Soon after the murder of Jason, his power had passed into the hands of his nephew Alexander, a brutal and unscrupulous tyrant of the most villainous type. Lust, drunkenness, treachery, and cruelty were the prominent features of his character. He sacked two neighbouring towns without cause in time of peace, slew the men, and enslaved the women and children, out of wanton delight in inflicting pain he buried men alive or sewed them up in the skins of animals to be worried to death by dogs, his own wife he treated with such insults and suspicion that he drove her at last to procure his murder, and such was the general detestation in which he was held, that his corpse was trampled underfoot in the streets and thrown into the sea.

But early in his reign the shameful misdeeds of Alexander had driven the Thessalians to revolt. The Aleuadae of Larissa had begged the king of Macedonia to join in the rebellion, and had put their city and others in his hands. But when Alexander was defeated a new situation arose. The Macedonian refused to leave. Caught thus between Macedonia and Pherae, the Thessalian league asked for help from Thebes. Pelopidas was sent out with a free hand to deal with Thessaly in the Theban interest. At once he attacked Larissa, drove out the Macedonians, pushed on into Macedonia itself, and dictated peace, bringing back among his hostages the king's

brother, Philip, who was to play a different part when he entered Thebes the second time. Alexander too was routed and driven back wounded to his own city. The tyrant now thought it prudent to be conciliatory. But Pelopidas would have nothing to do with such a man. He strengthened and re-organised the league with an annually elected archon instead of a "tagus" at its head, and having settled northern affairs returned home.

**Pelopidas at Susa.** The Thebans now thought it time to make a general peace which would recognise theirs as the leading state. Copying the example of Sparta, they sent Pelopidas to Susa to get himself accredited by Persia as the interpreter of the King's peace. The mission was successful in spite of the intrigues of the other states. The King's messenger accompanied Pelopidas on his return, and a congress was summoned to Thebes to hear the message. The Spartans, however, refused to recognise the independence of Messene, the Arcadians did not see why Thebes should take the lead, and the Athenians would not lay up their ships to suit the Theban policy. Thus the attempt to get the Theban supremacy recognised fell through.

**Pelopidas seized by Alexander and rescued, 366 B.C.** The next year Pelopidas was engaged on a peaceful mission in Thessaly, when he was treacherously seized by his enemy, Alexander, and kept in captivity. The Thebans sent a force of 9000 horse and foot to rescue him, but Epameinondas was serving only in the ranks, since the authorities were not pleased with his third expedition of the previous year. The Thessalians too came out to help to save their protector. But the Thebans hesitated to proceed to extremes, lest Pelopidas should be murdered. The delay was fatal. Provisions failed, the Thessalians melted away, and the Thebans began to retire, harassed by the Phraean horse. At this point the army deposed its incompetent generals and entrusted itself to Epameinondas, who brought it safely back to Thebes. Then, gathering a new force, he marched north once more. The mere terror of his name was enough,



Alexander was deserted on every side, and thought it wise to give up his prisoner unharmed

**Battle of Cynoscephalae, 364 B.C.** Two years later, when the tyrant resumed his cruelties, Pelopidas was again summoned to the rescue. He took none with him but his bodyguard of horse, some volunteers, and mercenaries, for an eclipse of the sun foretold disaster. Many Thessalians rallied to his side, but he was outnumbered by the foe, who guarded the pass that leads to Pherae. He then tried to cross the ridge of hills called Cynoscephalae, which lies to the north-west of the town, but as he neared the top he found Alexander already in possession of the crest. In spite of the disadvantage he at once attacked so fiercely that his cavalry drove the enemy's horse down into the plain. The infantry, however, could make no impression till the cavalry returned. Then the Pheraean mercenaries wavered. In vain Alexander tried to rally the ranks. Pelopidas saw him, challenged him to single combat, and dashed at him as he retired amongst his guards. But heroic valour was not enough, Pelopidas was cut down and slain. Maddened by the loss of their leader, the Thebans charged upon their foes and scattered them in hopeless flight, but, instead of following them up, they halted to bury their general. The Thessalians begged the privilege for themselves and gave him a magnificent funeral. Reinforcements now arrived from Thebes, and Alexander submitted, for his power by land was effectually broken. He then turned to piracy, until some years later, at the instigation of his wife, he was murdered by his brothers-in-law, the sons of Jason, and the stage of Northern Greece was left open for the entrance of the kings of Macedonia.

**Fourth expedition of Epameinondas, 362 B.C.** Meantime in the Peloponnese the Arcadians had fallen out with Elis, a battle was fought in the sacred precincts during the Olympic festival, and the temple treasure was seized. Mantinea refused to join in such sacrilege and, breaking away from the Arcadian league, made peace with Sparta. It was high time

for Thebes to interfere For the fourth time Epameinondas led a host into the Peloponnese His force consisted of Boeotians, Euboeans, and Thessalians, and was reinforced by Argives, Messenians, and half the Arcadians Advancing to Tegea, he blocked the way from Sparta north to Mantinea The old king Agesilaus took command, and moved by another route to save his new friends At once Epameinondas broke up his camp, and with 30,000 men swooped down upon defenceless Sparta But by luck the news reached Agesilaus, and with a portion of the troops he hurried back and arrived just in time There was a skirmish in the suburbs, but Epameinondas did not like street-fighting and was afraid of the arrival of the rest of the Lacedaemonians and their allies So, hastily changing his plans, he marched back at full speed in the hopes of surprising Mantinea His weary infantry halted at Tegea, but the cavalry pushed on Once more luck was against him The Athenian horse had at that moment arrived, and they repelled the attack

Battle of Mantinea, 362 B.C. Agesilaus, following the Thebans, soon reached Mantinea, and with Eleians and Achaeans was now at the head of 22,000 men His numbers were inferior, but he offered battle, drawing up his line with Spartans and Mantinians on the right, Athenians on the left, and the rest in the centre Epameinondas repeated the tactics of Leuctra On the left, facing the Spartans, was the dense phalanx of Boeotians, in the centre and somewhat behind were Arcadians and Messenians, the right and rear was composed of Argives while the Euboeans occupied a hill from which they could fall upon the flank of the Athenians if they moved to help the rest

The day was far advanced when the Thebans arrived and halted, and the enemy were led to think there would be no fight till the morrow Suddenly Epameinondas hurled his Boeotian cavalry upon the enemy's horse and put them to flight Then the Theban phalanx charged, crashing through the Spartan line and routing it

Death of Epameinondas But at the moment of

triumph the general was mortally wounded in the chest with a spear. The news spread rapidly, and the whole army halted where it stood and made no use of its victory, while on their wing the Athenians gained a slight success. Epameinondas was carried to the rear. "Is my shield safe?" he cried, and, learning that both his immediate subordinates were dead, "You had better make peace," he exclaimed. The spear-head was then withdrawn, and with the rush of blood the noblest of the Greeks passed away.

The battle was absolutely indecisive. Over 50,000 Greeks had fought together, but nobody could say who had won. Both sides set up trophies, both sides acknowledged defeat by asking for the dead. A period of confusion followed in which none could be called the leading state. Peace was agreed upon by all except the Spartans, who were now so weak as to be ignored. Agesilaus, a pathetic figure, the lame, gray-haired king, who had started to lead Greece against Persia and had lived to see his country ruined, died the next year at the age of eighty-five on an expedition in Egypt. Thebes sank back into mediocrity, she had never been really great, she had merely shone with the reflected lustre of her two brilliant sons.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Which was the greater, Epameinondas or Jason?
4. Under which would you rather have served?
5. Why was the pre-eminence of any one Greek state so short-lived?
6. Draw a plan of the battle of Mantinea.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## DIONYSIUS OF SYRACUSE

The Carthaginian danger We must now carry our thoughts backwards fifty years We saw in an earlier chapter that when the Greeks of the East were threatened by the power of Persia, their brethren in the West were, at the same moment, and probably designedly so, assailed by the forces of Carthage At the end of the fifth century we again find that a collision with Persia corresponds, in time at least, with a Carthaginian invasion The ancient struggle was renewed in this way After the defeat of the Athenians, the Syracusans determined to punish their enemies Accordingly Hermocrates was despatched to the Aegean with a squadron to assist the Peloponnesian cause In Sicily the Syracusans attacked Catana and Naxos, the Ionian traitors, while Selinus tried to take vengeance on Segesta, which had called in the Athenians

In their distress the Segestans appealed for Carthaginian aid For seventy years the Carthaginians had remained content with their fortresses at the western end of the island and had left the Greeks alone But the Athenian invasion had awakened them to the possibilities of an Hellenic advance, and Hannibal, one of their two supreme magistrates, was burning to avenge the defeat and death of his grandfather, Hamilcar, at the Himera

Fall of Selinus, 409 B.C. An expedition therefore of over 100,000 men, Libyans, Spaniards, and Carthaginians, under the command of Hannibal, was landed at Lilybaeum, and marched at once upon Selinus The city hastily sent for help to Syracuse, Gela, and Acragas, and the whole population prepared to defend themselves But before assistance

could arrive, Hannibal had his towers and battering-rams in position, the walls were breached, and on the tenth day the barbarian hordes poured into the town. Then followed a horrible scene of plunder, fire, and indiscriminate slaughter.

**Destruction of Himera, 409 B.C.** His orders carried out, Hannibal marched instantly upon Himera to get his personal revenge. The Siceliots<sup>1</sup> had just time to throw 4000 men, chiefly Syracusans, into the town before the enemy appeared. At once the siege-engines were set to work, and mines and rams breached the wall the very first day. A sortie on the next morning drove back the foe, but Hannibal spread a rumour that his fleet was going to attack Syracuse. The Syracusan troops hastily marched away with a crowd of fugitives, while their squadron, that had just arrived, carried off half the women and children to Messana. On the fourth morning, as the ships returned to take away the rest, the wild Spaniards broke into the town. Again there was a fearful massacre, and the town was sacked and levelled to the ground. Of the prisoners, 3000 men were tortured to death on the spot where Hamilcar had died, and the surviving women and children were carried away as slaves. Thus in less than a month Hannibal had blotted out two Greek cities and sailed back to Africa.

**Fall of Acragas, 406 B.C.** While absent in the Aegean, Hermocrates had been banished by the extreme democrats lest he should make himself tyrant. He now came back to Sicily, re-occupied Selinus, and made war upon the Carthaginian fortresses. He then tried to force his way into Syracuse, for his opponents were unpopular on account of the failure to save Himera. But he was slain in the Agora, and a certain follower of his named Dionysius lay wounded on the ground beside him. Of this man we shall hear more anon. The action of Hermocrates at Selinus roused the Carthaginians to wrath, and they made a second attack, this

<sup>1</sup> The word "Siceliots" means Sicilian Greeks, as opposed to "Sicels", who were natives. Similarly "Italots" means Italian Greeks.

time upon Acragas. The city had stood apart from the quarrels of the Siceliots and was at the height of its prosperity. Hannibal brought over 120,000 men and began the siege. The operations were prolonged, plague broke out in the camp, Hannibal died, and Himilco took the command, 35,000 Siceliots arrived and kept open one side of the town. But after eight months Himilco captured a Syracusan fleet laden with stores. Menaced by hunger the Siceliots dispersed to their homes, and the luxurious Acragantines, failing in courage, evacuated the city by night. Next morning the Carthaginians entered to plunder and burn, but none except the old and the sick were left for them to slay.

Dionysius becomes tyrant at Syracuse, 406—368 B.C. The ignominious retreat from Acragas aroused much feeling at Syracuse. Among the most vehement was Hermocrates' partisan, Dionysius, who had distinguished himself for bravery in the late campaign. He procured the dismissal of the generals and the election of others, including himself, in their place. The next step was to accuse his colleagues of disloyalty and to get himself chosen sole general with full powers. Finally he spread a rumour of an attempt to murder him, and a packed assembly of his own supporters voted him a bodyguard of mercenaries. His position as tyrant was now secure, though in name democracy continued, and the people were the more willing to acquiesce in the situation while the Carthaginian danger threatened them. Dionysius knew that he was necessary to the city, and he was resolved that this need of him should continue. In consequence, when Gela was attacked and made a stubborn defence, he came indeed with an army and fleet. But, though the Carthaginians lost half their army through the plague and there was an excellent opportunity of crushing them, yet Dionysius unaccountably failed and gave orders that both Gela and Camarina should be evacuated. Thus two possible rivals were abandoned to the enemy, and shortly afterwards a peace was made, by which Dionysius recognised Carthaginian possession of western Sicily, while he was guaranteed as the master of Syracuse.

His government Relying on Carthaginian support, Dionysius now strengthened himself at home His body-guard of mercenaries was largely increased, the island of Ortygia was very strongly fortified, hundreds of his political enemies were put to death or driven into exile, and their property was confiscated, the citizens were heavily taxed and carefully watched by a host of spies Yet the crimes of Dionysius were purely political and were done with a definite object He was not wantonly cruel, nor did he display the intemperance, insolence, and lust which brought about the fall of so many tyrants His only desire was for power, and that he was determined to keep at any cost to himself and to others Not even the cares and worries of perpetual suspicion deterred him from that Though he was so nervous that every visitor had to be searched and he dared not trust his throat to any barber's blade, yet he clung to his position The courtier Damocles envied his prosperity Dionysius asked him to dine and entertained him royally, as if the two had exchanged places In the midst of all the magnificence Damocles looked up Above his head was a great sword suspended by a single hair Thus did Dionysius illustrate the tyrant's life, and yet think such a life worth while Naturally plots and revolts were frequent, and more than once his case seemed hopeless Yet his skill and activity weathered the storms

His activity Outside, too, his power was felt The Sicel towns of the interior were conquered, Naxos and Catana were taken and the people enslaved, the inhabitants of Leontini were forced to be his subjects and live in Syracuse Preparations were made for the inevitable struggle with Carthage The heights of Epipolae were enclosed by massive fortifications, three miles of the northern wall was built in twenty days by 60,000 citizens, great siege engines were constructed and the catapult invented, a fleet of 300 ships, including quinqueremes, was launched

Capture of Motya, 398 B.C. As soon as he was ready, at the head of a mighty force he marched to expel the

Carthaginians from Sicily. The town of Motya lay in an extremely strong position on an island in the middle of its harbour, connected with the mainland only by a causeway. This the defenders destroyed, but Dionysius threw out a mole and brought his towers, engines, and rams up to the town. The rams battered the walls; the artillery cleared them of their defenders, the six-storeyed towers were wheeled up to the buildings, and many a fierce struggle took place in mid-air as the assailants threw out gangways and tried to cross from tower to wall.

Meanwhile Himilco with his fleet attacked the Syracusan ships as they lay upon the shore. But the Greek catapults hurled showers of stones among the enemy, and Dionysius laid down rollers and hauled his vessels to the sea a mile away in the other direction. Himilco then retired, and the town after a desperate resistance was carried by a night assault. As Hannibal had treated Himera, so the Greeks revenged themselves at Motya, thousands were slain, and the survivors were sold into slavery.

**Siege of Syracuse, 397 B.C.** Next year the fortune of war changed. Himilco returned, recaptured Motya, and then made himself master of Messina and the straits. His ships defeated the Greeks off Catania, sailed on into the Greek harbour of Syracuse itself, and army and fleet encamped by the marshes at the mouth of the river Anapus. But the air of the swamp proved deadly, the plague broke out again, and Dionysius led a combined attack by land and sea upon the foe. A crushing victory was the result, the mercenaries and allies of Carthage were annihilated, but the tyrant suffered Himilco and the native Carthaginians to escape, that there might still be an enemy against whom he himself would be needed by the citizens.

Later wars between Dionysius and Carthage. Five years later peace was made. Mago had landed and attacked the Sicel towns of the interior, but Dionysius was in alliance with them and came to their help, and, when the treaty was signed, Syracuse was recognised as mistress of both Greeks



and Sicels, while the Carthaginians were confined to the fortresses of the extreme west. Yet the peace was not to last. In 383 B.C. hostilities broke out once more. Dionysius won a great victory and slew Mago, but lost everything soon afterwards in a bloody defeat, and saw his boundaries cut short. Again in 368 B.C. he made a last attack and assaulted the fortress of Lilybaeum. But he met with no success and lost most of his fleet. Both sides were now exhausted, and for nearly thirty years there was peace.

Dionysius' schemes outside Sicily. When the treaty of 392 B.C. had recognised the supremacy of Syracuse, Dionysius turned his ambitious thoughts beyond Sicily. Nearly a century before, the Greeks of Tarentum had suffered disastrously when they attacked the natives of the interior. For some years past there had been a movement of the mountain tribes towards the toe of Italy. The Lucanians in particular pressed the Italiot cities hard. Choosing this moment, Dionysius made his attack, and city after city fell into his hands. Rhegium, which with Messana guarded the straits, held out for long, but he starved it into submission at length, and all who could not pay ransom were sold. Some cities were destroyed and their inhabitants transplanted to Syracuse; others opened their gates, won over by his unexpected clemency when after one battle he let 10,000 prisoners go free without demanding even a ransom. His success reached its climax in the capture of Croton. But, even northwards of that, the Italiot cities, including Tarentum, were his dependencies, and colonies for trading purposes were planted on both sides of the Adriatic right up to where Venice now stands.

Even in Greece itself his influence was felt. Alcetas of Epius sought his help and became his dependent, Sparta begged and obtained the assistance of his ships of war, Athens awarded him the first prize for his tragedies, and Olympia saw with astonishment the magnificence of his embassies. Yet Greece looked upon him with suspicion. Men dreaded his army of mercenaries. He had spoiled the

temple of Hera near Croton, the holiest place of the Italiots, and had sold the robe of the goddess to the Carthaginians, the barbarians, for 120 talents<sup>1</sup> He had made a plot to carry off the treasures of Delphi itself It was with a feeling of relief that Greece heard of his death in 368 B C

Dionysius the Younger. His son, Dionysius the Younger, succeeded to his power He was, however, a feeble ruler and always under the influence of others In the earlier years of his government he was guided by his uncle, Dion, who had been the trusted friend of the old tyrant Dion was a man of thoughtful temperament and an ardent disciple of the great Athenian philosopher, Plato, whom he induced to come to Syracuse and try to influence the prince

Plato Plato was not averse from leaving Athens Like his master, Socrates, he was ready to do his duty to his own state, but let his mind roam beyond the narrow limits of local patriotism He would have all men fellow-citizens of the world of thought and philosophy, all men should be brothers in searching after the ideal good For to Plato's mind there was somewhere an ideal pattern of every thing upon earth, and he had himself sketched out in *The Republic* his scheme of an ideal state The building of it would be hard, a tyrant wisely guided, a "philosopher king", would be in the best position to set it up on earth To try the experiment, Dion brought Plato to Syracuse The philosopher was received with great honour and respect, and his new pupil at first listened with eagerness But soon enthusiasm waned, the prince was frankly bored, enemies whispered that Dion was scheming to get the tyranny Dionysius therefore banished Dion, Plato went home to Athens, and the dreamers' scheme was dropped

Confusion in Syracuse The rule of Dionysius was neither good nor bad He cared not for conquest or power, but merely wished to enjoy the good things his father had left to him For eleven years he held his position, till one day

<sup>1</sup> £28,800

Dion returned, and the Syracusans, hailing him as their deliverer, rose and drove the tyrant out. But the people were soon disillusioned, and found they had only changed masters. The philosopher had become a tyrant himself. His reign was not long, he was murdered, and man after man succeeded to the tyranny. In 346 B.C. Dionysius returned and made himself master again. But his subjects found that his habits had changed for the worse, and, to add to their troubles, Carthage was becoming active once more.

Timoleon goes to Sicily, 344 B.C. In their distress the Syracusans appealed for aid to Corinth, their mother-city. The Corinthians were fortunate in their choice of a leader. There was a man of noble birth, Timoleon by name, who had proved his sense of honour and duty by helping to slay his own brother, who had tried to make himself tyrant of Corinth. Weary of life through his mother's reproaches, Timoleon was ready to accept any task, however hopeless, that took him out of himself and Corinth.

He frees Syracuse. With a small force of ten ships he set sail, and reached the island in spite of the presence of a Carthaginian fleet. There he was welcomed by many towns which, like Syracuse, were suffering from tyranny. Alarmed by his success, Dionysius surrendered Ortygia on condition that he might go and live in Corinth unharmed. Timoleon, however, was not yet in possession of the rest of the city, for it had fallen into the hands of Hicetas, the tyrant of Leontini, who combined with Carthage to keep out the new arrival. But the confederates fell out with one another, the Carthaginians went home, Hicetas was expelled, and Timoleon became the master of Syracuse. His honourable nature was proof against temptation. He pulled down the tyrant's fortress, recalled the thousands who were in exile, and restored the democracy.

Battle of the Crimisus, 340 B.C. A few years later his services were again required. The Carthaginians landed one of their huge armies at Lilybaeum and prepared to march through the island. But, though he was outnumbered by

seven to one, Timoleon advanced to meet them in their own territory. He caught them in the act of crossing the river Crimisus. Down charged the Greeks and cut to pieces the Sacred Band, the flower of the Carthaginian troops. A thunderstorm broke over the combatants, and rain and hail drove in the enemy's face and turned the stream to a raging torrent. Back into the foaming waters were flung horse, foot, and chariots, in hopeless confusion.

Death of Timoleon, 337 B.C. Carthage soon made peace. Then Timoleon, having suppressed the tyrants and thrust back the foreign foe, laid down all his extraordinary powers, and retired into private life, the idol of the citizens. Not long afterwards he died, mourned and loved by Syracuse and all Greek Sicily.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Did Dionysius do harm or good?
- 4 Account for the failure of the Carthaginians
- 5 With Timoleon's opportunities what would you have done?

## CHAPTER XXIV

### PHILIP OF MACEDON

Peace after the battle of Mantinea. Few battles have been less decisive than that of Mantinea, but peace followed at once because all parties were exhausted and utterly weary of interminable warfare. Yet certain changes could be seen in the following years. It was obvious that the scheme of uniting Arcadia was not a success, it was apparent that Sparta had definitely sunk into the second rank, it was

equally clear that Thebes was no longer the leading state. Theban supremacy had not been political, it had been merely military, and the death of Pelopidas and Epameinondas proved that the brilliance was that of her two great men, not that of the city herself.

**Importance of Athens** The result of the battle therefore was that Athens alone had gained, not by her own efforts but by the loss of the rest. The new Athenian fleet was considerable, and Chabrias, Timotheus, and Iphicrates were the most renowned officers alive in Greece. Yet the mass of the people had no desire to adopt an aggressive policy. The more intellectual wished the city to be, as Pericles said, "an education for Greece" in philosophy, art, and literature, the more practical concerned themselves chiefly with commerce and manufacture. There was little desire to man the ships they possessed, there was a great reluctance to serve in the army at all, any necessary fighting might well be done in the new fashion by mercenaries. Thus, in spite of the size of their fleet, the Athenians had at one moment been at the mercy of Epameinondas when he had taken a Boeotian squadron to Byzantium, and in broad daylight the Peiraeus had been raided by the pirate ships of Alexander of Pherae.

**The Social war, 357—355 B.C.** However, a certain party in the state kept trying to form an Athenian empire once more. Various places had been acquired, such as Pydna in Macedonia, Potidaea, and most of the Thracian Chersonese, while longing eyes were cast upon Amphipolis, the old Athenian colony. Across the Aegean too Samos, which had been taken by Persia, was rescued by an Athenian force, and, in direct defiance of the treaty with the allies, occupied by Athenian settlers. This act aroused the wrath of other members of the confederacy, and stirred up by Mausolus<sup>1</sup>, the ambitious and self-seeking prince of Caria, Byzantium, Chios, and Rhodes led a general revolt, which is known as the "Social war". Chabrias and Chares with sixty ships were sent against Chios,

<sup>1</sup> His statue and the sculptures from his tomb, the "Mausoleum", are in the British Museum.



The Aphrodite of Melos  
(Sculptor unknown, the statue is now in the Louvre)



but Chabrias was slain, and the victorious Chians tried to turn out the settlers from Samos. Iphicrates and Timotheus now arrived with reinforcements, but, grown cautious with old age, they dared not attack. Chares rashly made the attempt and was repulsed. So annoyed were the Athenians that Iphicrates was dismissed and Timotheus was condemned to pay a fine of 100 talents<sup>1</sup>. Chares, left in sole command, drew down the wrath of Persia by helping a rebellious satrap in Phrygia. When the Great King threatened to send a Phoenician fleet, the Athenians were alarmed, recalled Chares, and recognised the independence of their allies. But before the Social war was concluded the Athenians found themselves involved in a far more serious struggle.

**Macedonia.** Macedonia up to this time had scarcely counted as one of the districts of Greece. The people indeed belonged to the Hellenic race and spoke a dialect of Greek, but they were regarded by the rest of the Greeks as semi-barbarian and uncivilised. The country, with Aegae as its principal town, lay about the lower courses of the rivers Axios and Haliacmon, but the proximity of fierce Illyrian highlanders on the west and wild Thracian tribes upon the north and east, combined with the rivalry of the Chalcidic colonies on the coast, had prevented any material development. The government was an absolute monarchy, but the kings lived stormy lives, and died violent deaths at the hands of fierce neighbours or jealous competitors for the throne. About the year 400 B.C. the country had made some advance under Archelaus, who built the town of Pella and attempted to make it a centre of Hellenic civilisation. Euripides, the dramatist, and Zeuxis, the famous painter, were amongst those who added lustre to his court.

**Philip of Macedon, 359—336 B.C.** But the king who was destined to make Macedonia was Philip. In the year 359 B.C. this remarkable man was appointed regent for his infant nephew. Though only twenty-four years old, he was the most able general and the most cunning diplomatist in Greece.

<sup>1</sup> £24,000



For a time he had been a hostage in Thebes (see p 247), and there he had profited by the military examples which he saw around him, learnt the jealousies and corruptibility which weakened all Greek states and statesmen, and conceived an intense admiration for Athenian culture, which, he saw, was the soul of Hellenic life

✓ **The Macedonian army** The moment that he was in authority, he set to work to reorganise the Macedonian army Iphicrates, Jason, and Dionysius had suggested the idea of a standing army, but had employed mercenaries for this purpose Iphicrates had paid attention to offensive weapons while lightening the cumbersome protective armour Dionysius had introduced siege-engines and artillery Epameinondas and Pelopidas had developed the principle of a heavy mass of infantry striking at one point of the enemy's line Jason had evolved the scheme of a similar phalanx of cavalry drawn up in a diamond form, which could be turned in a moment to right or left and could, like a wedge, cleave through the opposing ranks

Philip combined these ideas His army was a standing one, but was composed of his own warlike subjects The defensive armour was light, consisting of a small shield and corselet and leathern leggings, while the weapons were a short sword and an enormous pike The cavalry were drawn up in the wedge formation the lancers carried a 14 ft spear, while the "Companions", the heavy horse drawn from wealthy Macedonians alone, one regiment of whom were the royal horse-guards, used a short pike for hand to hand fighting The light-armed infantry, whether peltasts, archers, or slingers, were chiefly recruited from the subject tribes, but there were also Macedonians light-armed, one regiment of whom were the foot-guards The heavy-armed infantry, who formed the famous phalanx, were Macedonians The unit was a company of 16 files, 16 deep, two or four companies forming a regiment The men were armed with a two-handed pike 21 ft long, 15 ft projecting in front and a weighted end balancing the weapon behind As they stood 3 ft behind one

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

another, the levelled pikes of the first 5 men projected beyond the front rank, and thus there was a hedge of 5 pike points to be broken through before an enemy could come to close quarters, meanwhile the other 11 men of the file held their pikes sloping, until it was necessary to lower them as they stepped into the place of their fallen comrades in front. Of course the weak point was that the side was exposed and no turning movement was possible. The Romans used to open to let the phalanx through, and then attack it in the flanks and the rear. But Philip and Alexander used the phalanx in conjunction with other troops to cover its movements. The light-armed troops began the attack, the cavalry wedges split up the enemy's ranks, finally the irresistible phalanx rolled in and broke the wavering foe.

The extension of Macedonia. The first to feel the might of Philip's new army were the neighbouring tribes. One battle was enough for the Paeonians of the north, a single victory drove back the Illyrian mountaineers. Thus successful, he met with no opposition when he deposed his nephew and proclaimed himself king. His own clear brain had already marked out the next steps of his career. He must reach the sea and become possessed of wealth. The chief port on the coast was Pydna, a dependent ally of the Athenians, wealth lay in the gold mines of Mt Pangaeus in Thrace, the passage to which over the Strymon was guarded by Amphipolis, long coveted by Athens. To throw dust in Athenian eyes, he released some of their citizens who had helped a pretender against him and had fallen into his hands, and he proposed to capture Amphipolis for them if they would give him Pydna. The Athenians greedily swallowed the bait. Philip besieged and took Amphipolis, marched to Pydna and received that town from the Athenians, and then coolly kept both for himself. The infuriated Athenians negotiated for an alliance with Olynthus, which was alarmed by the Macedonian advance. Philip therefore quietly took the Athenian possession of Potidaea and handed it over to Olynthus, thus making the Olynthians his friends and the foes of Athens. Such

unscrupulous dishonesty was characteristic of his diplomacy. Nor could the Athenians retaliate, for the Social war (see p. 260) broke out and tied their hands.

Meanwhile Philip was at leisure to cross into Thrace, conquer the tribes, found a new city, Philippi, and make himself master of the mines. He was now the possessor of an income of 1000 talents<sup>1</sup> a year, a more potent weapon against Greeks than his phalanx, for, as he said, "no city was impregnable where a mule-load of silver could get in." This wealth and the fortunate course of events opened to him a road into Greece.

The Sacred war, 356—346 B.C. After the death of Epameinondas the Phocians had dared to break off a reluctant alliance with Thebes. The Thebans, anxious to avenge the insult, persuaded the ancient Amphictyonic Council to fine the Phocians on the pretext that they had occupied certain waste lands consecrated to the god of Delphi. Thereupon the Phocians under the leadership of Philomelus, annoyed by such hypocrisy, determined to commit the crime of sacrilege with which they were charged. They seized Delphi itself and all its vast treasure, and repulsed the Locrians of Amphissa who tried to turn them out. They then issued a declaration to justify their action, enlisted the sympathies of Sparta, Athens, and other states hostile to Thebes, and collected a force of mercenaries, who were ready enough to fight when the wealth of Delphi was a guarantee for their pay. The Amphictyons proclaimed a Sacred war, and Locrians, Thebans, and Thessalians undertook the pious crusade.

But the crusaders fared badly. Philomelus indeed was defeated and slain, but Onomarchus, his lieutenant, won surprising success and carried the war into the enemy's country. He then with Apollo's gold bribed the new tyrants of Pherae, the sons of Jason. They had slain Alexander (see p. 248) and succeeded to his power, and were attempting to extend their sway over Thessaly.

<sup>1</sup> £240,000

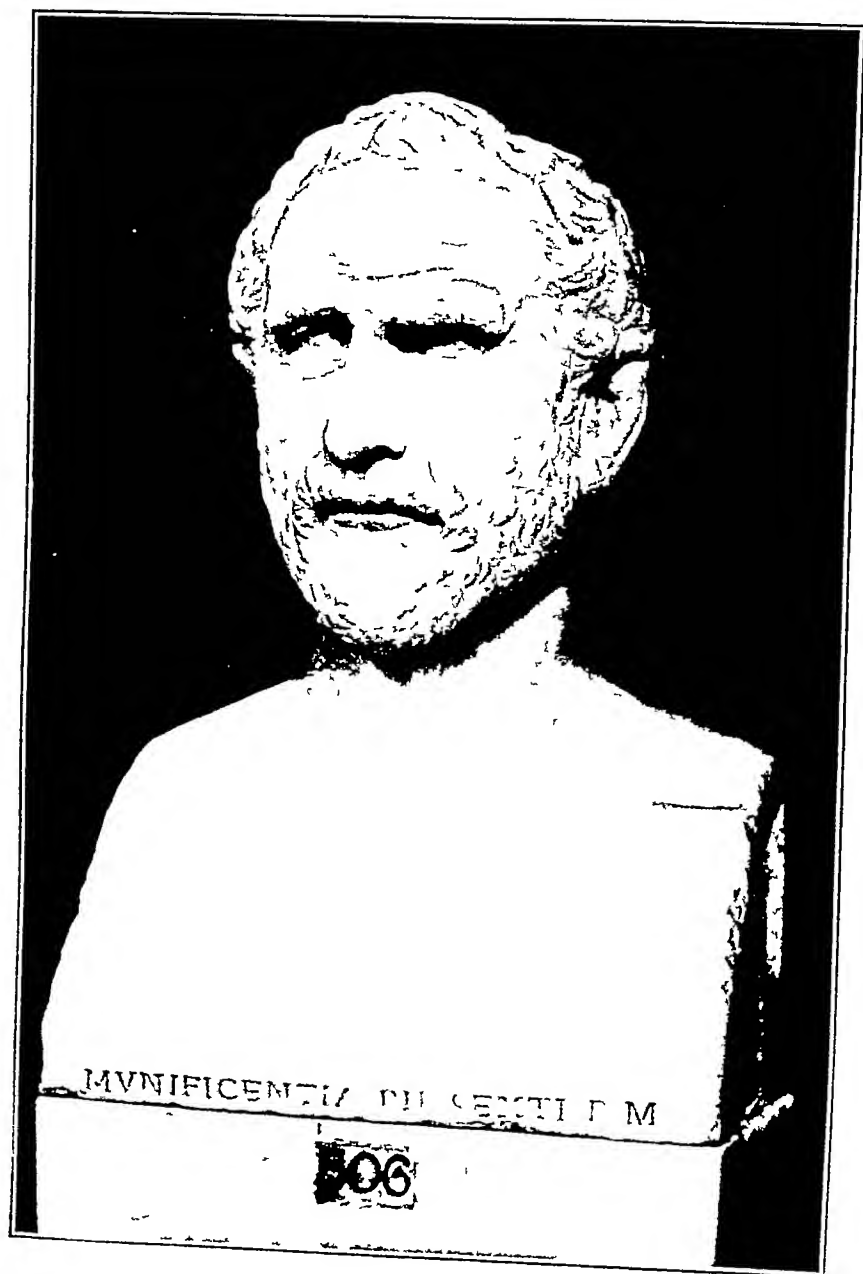
Philip master of Thessaly, 352 B C The Aleuadae of Larissa once more asked for Macedonian help, and Philip eagerly embraced the opportunity of interfering in Greek affairs. South he came, defeated Onomarchus' brother, Phayllus, and captured Pagasae, but, when Onomarchus himself arrived with 20,000 men, Philip and the Thessalians were twice severely defeated. Next year he advanced once more to retrieve his humiliation, and, as the champion of Apollo, fought a decisive action on the shore between Pagasae and Halus. Onomarchus and 6000 men were slain, 3000 prisoners were taken, and the rest were only saved by an Athenian squadron under Chares. Philip then committed a barbarous act. Other Greeks would perhaps have drowned the prisoners, as he did on the charge of sacrilege, but no other Greek would have crucified the corpse of Onomarchus. Pherae soon fell into his hands, and he was the real master of Thessaly, though he gave to all the towns except Pagasae their nominal freedom. From there he pushed on against Phocis itself, but at Thermopylae he was checked by an Athenian army and fleet, and, finding the position impregnable, he turned back homewards to await patiently a more favourable occasion.

Philip's attitude towards Athens. We have seen that Philip had already come into collision with the Athenians more than once. Yet, although a state of war existed, hostilities were not prosecuted with energy on either side. Philip for his part wished to be friendly, and would have been content with the expulsion of the Athenians from his own sea-board in Macedonia and Thrace. It was his desire in the first place to make Macedonia in every way Greek. Already in 356 B C his victory in the chariot-race at Olympia had brought about the recognition of his place in the Hellenic world. For the spreading of culture among his subjects he would gladly have won the friendship of Athens, for whose intellectual and artistic supremacy he had the greatest respect, and as tutor for his heir Alexander he chose the famous philosopher and scholar Aristotle, who by education at least was an Athenian.

HIS next aim was to place Macedonia at the head of a confederation of Greek states, as Jason would have done for Pherae. To interfere with their government or independence he had no wish, and an alliance with Athens would have been enough for him. His final ambition was again that of Jason, to lead the hosts of Hellas to the conquest of the East.

**Peace-party at Athens** The Athenians on their side had little desire for war. The fighting spirit, which had been aroused by Marathon and the glories of the Periclean age, had passed away. Eubulus, one of the few capable finance ministers that Greece produced, was in charge of the public purse, and his peaceful policy was suited to the commercial and intellectual tendencies of the day. Among his supporters were the aged professor Isocrates, ready as always to welcome any Greek who would lead against Persia, Phocion, a blunt, practical man of moderate talent, and Aeschines, a brilliant speaker somewhat too open to bribes.

**The war-party and Demosthenes** Yet a small war-party existed, of which the leader was Demosthenes, the most famous of all Greek orators. Demosthenes was the son of a wealthy shield-manufacturer, but on his father's early death his guardians had defrauded him of his property. To recover his estate he took lessons in oratory and entered upon a series of lawsuits against them. He then tried public speaking, but his manner was awkward and nervous, and he was hooted down in the assembly. For many months he practised before a mirror, speaking sometimes with a stone in his mouth, or making himself heard against the noise of wind and waves upon the shore, till at last his manner and speech were perfect enough to ensure attention. Henceforward his passionate and fiery speeches always moved the assembly, and the only person whom he feared was Phocion. "Here comes the 'chopper' of my fine sentences," cried he when his opponent rose to speak. Demosthenes should have lived a century before, he was ever trying to stir up the sluggish Athenians to an activity which they no longer possessed. The first of his most brilliant speeches, one upon the inefficient state of



Demosthenes



the forces, has from the gist of its contents been known as the first *Philippic*. The name of Philip and the story of his iniquities were for ever afterwards upon his lips.

Philip captures Olynthus, 348 B.C. After his repulse at Thermopylae Philip had turned his activities against Thrace and Illyria for a while, but presently he made an attack upon Olynthus and the cities of Chalcidice. Olynthus applied to Athens, and the *Olynthiac* orations of Demosthenes secured the despatch of assistance. But the first force was inefficient, and the second arrived too late. The towns were swallowed up by Philip one by one, and lastly Olynthus fell into his hands, to be destroyed and to have its inhabitants scattered or sold into slavery.

Peace of Philocrates, 346 B.C. The Athenians were now thoroughly alarmed for their possessions in the Chersonese, the only part they still held in Thrace. But the employment of mercenaries in the prolonged war had exhausted the treasury, and, when they found Philip ready for peace, they sent Philocrates and nine other envoys, including Demosthenes and Aeschines, to arrange about terms. Philip entertained them in lavish style at Pella and charmed most of them with his courtesy and attentions—and gold. It was at length arranged that each side should keep what it should have got at the moment when peace should be signed, but that the Phocians should be excluded.

The envoys then returned, and were followed by Macedonian commissioners to obtain the Athenian oath and signature. Meantime Philip hurriedly made a campaign into Thrace to sweep into his possession a few more towns. When the Athenians had signed, they sent their ten envoys to obtain Philip's signature. Aeschines and others, who had been bribed, purposely wasted time on the way, waited at Pella for Philip to return from Thrace, and then accompanied him southwards to Pherae before obtaining his oath. In a few days his cunning was revealed. The Sacred war had still dragged wearily on, and the Thebans had invited Philip to come and crush the Phocians. The moment the peace was



signed he marched hastily upon Thermopylae, there were no Athenians there now to bar his way, the Phocians surrendered at discretion. Advancing to Delphi, he summoned the Amphictyonic Council. At his wish the Phocians escaped comparatively easily, but their towns were dismantled and broken up into villages, the people were disarmed, and the treasure of Delphi was to be repaid by instalments. The Council then gave the two Phocian votes to Philip, so that he was fully recognised as a member of the sacred Hellenic league, and they also conferred upon him the presidency of the Pythian games, which were duly held with great pomp and splendour. Thus Philip achieved his ambition without striking a blow, and the duped Athenians were left in impotent rage, cursing their own stupidity and quarrelling amongst themselves.

**War between Philip and Athens, 341 B.C.** For the next few years, however, the peace was nominally kept, though the Athenians tried to harm Philip as much as possible by intrigues. The king strengthened his position wherever he could. Garrisons were planted in some of the Thessalian towns, quarrels in the Peloponnese invited the interference of Macedonian troops, Philip himself was occupied in the conquest of Epirus and the western coast.

Demosthenes meantime went about Greece warning other states against the unscrupulous enemy and his dangerous courtesy, and the Athenians helped his foes as opportunity arose. Philip protested against such unfriendly acts, but his sincere desire for peace with Athens and his knowledge that he could do little against such a naval power led him to endure many a violation of neutrality. When, however, the Athenian commander in the Chersonese definitely attacked Macedonian territory, he was compelled to act. The crisis had come. Phocion and the honest peace-party, Aeschines and those who had taken Philip's gold, both alike wished to disown the raid. But Demosthenes and his friends denounced the "villainies" of Philip and stirred up the people to active war.

Demosthenes himself went to Perinthus and Byzantium, to Chalcis, and to Western Greece, and concluded alliances, Megara and Corinth too were induced to join. Philip determined upon the old plan of starving Athens by the seizure of the Bosphorus. Accordingly he laid siege to Perinthus, but so obstinate was the resistance that he transferred his operations to Byzantium. Yet here too he was checked, for the city held out till Phocion with 120 ships arrived, and the siege was raised. For a year the Macedonian disappeared. A revolt of the tribes near the Danube mouth demanded his presence.

**Philip enters Boeotia.** In 338 B.C. Philip entered Greece once more. The occasion arose in the following way. Aeschines, in all probability suborned by Philip's gold, brought against Amphissa the usual charge of sacrilege. The Amphictyonic Council invited Philip to punish the offender, and without a moment's delay he marched southwards, passed through Thermopylae, and fortified the Phocian town of Elateia, which commanded his line of communications and likewise the road to the south. When the news reached Athens there was the wildest panic and consternation. Was his object Amphissa or Athens? Demosthenes calmed the people and bade them send him and others as envoys to Thebes. The Athenians were on bad terms with their northern neighbours, but perhaps an alliance might be made. The attempt was successful. Though Philip's army was at hand and his ambassadors were in Thebes demanding a free passage if not active help, yet the Athenians prevailed.

**Battle of Chaeroneia, 338 B.C.** For some reason Philip did not strike immediately. He turned westwards to capture Amphissa and perform his sacred duty. Then he faced south once more and met the Thebans and Athenians with their allies in the narrow part of the plain near Chaeroneia. The Thebans occupied the allied right and were the pick of the defending force. Against them, therefore, Philip sent his son Alexander, at the head of the true Macedonian troops, the phalanx and the heavy cavalry. He himself led the inferior

troops against the Athenians on the other wing and against the Corinthians, Megarians, and others in the centre. The battle fell out as he planned. His own weak force fell back before the Athenian attack and drew the enemy on. Meanwhile the furious charges of Alexander's horse clove asunder the Theban ranks, and the phalanx broke them into flight. But the 300 of the Sacred Band would not fly, to a man they died where they fought, and a marble lion still marks the spot where they made their valiant stand. Alexander's force then turned upon the rest and, attacking the flank and the rear, routed them utterly.

**Philip's treatment of Greece** Greece was now at Philip's mercy, and he signalled the occasion by indulging in one of his frequent drunken orgies, staggering about the battle-field and singing and dancing among the corpses. Yet as an old woman knew how to appeal "from Philip drunk to Philip sober", so after his drunken excesses he showed most sober moderation. Thebes, which shortly surrendered, was indeed punished in the usual Greek way. His leading opponents were exiled or put to death, the Boeotian League was broken up, and the Cadmeia was occupied by a Macedonian garrison. But no man could have expected the lenient terms he offered to the Athenians. He sent back all the prisoners without ransom, and merely required that Athens should give him the Chersonese and join the Macedonian alliance. No doubt he knew that further success against a naval power was very uncertain, but it is also clear that he still wished for Athenian friendship and desired to fight not against Greeks but against Persians.

**Congress of Corinth** Soon afterwards Philip presented himself in the Peloponnese. Only the pride of Sparta refused to submit, but of course her decayed power could do nothing, and the result of her refusal was the loss of more of her territory. Envoys from all Greek states were then summoned to a congress at Corinth, and their relations with Macedonia were made clear. All cities were to be independent and free to govern themselves as they willed, but each was

bound to Philip by a treaty of alliance, and together they formed a confederacy, with Macedon at the head. To ensure loyalty, Macedonian garrisons were placed in Ambracia, Chalcis, and Corinth, as well as in Thebes. Philip now put before the congress his Pan-Hellenic scheme for invading the East. A century and a half earlier a congress at Corinth had discussed the defence of Greece, now a similar congress planned her revenge. Philip was voted absolute commander-in-chief, and every state promised its contingent.

**Murder of Philip, 336 B.C.** But Philip's barbaric habit of marrying many wives dashed the cup of success from his lips. His chief wife and queen was Olympias, a princess of Epirus, mother of his heir Alexander. Yet he quarrelled with her and her fiery son, and presently divorced her in order to marry Cleopatra, the niece of one of his generals, Attalus. Thirsting for revenge and anxious about the succession of her son, Olympias found a young man who had been wronged by Attalus and refused justice by the king. He was easily persuaded to act. Philip was celebrating the marriage of one of his daughters, and, as he walked alone and unguarded in the midst of the procession, the assassin sprang forward and plunged a dagger into his heart. Thus at the age of forty-seven, on the eve of fulfilling his life's ambition, was slain the maker of Macedonia.

SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Do you admire Philip?
- 4 Was Demosthenes a statesman or a windy gas-bag?
- 5 Would Athens have done better to have followed the lead of the peace-party?
- 6 Why was Philip able to make himself the master of Greece?

## CHAPTER XXV

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

**Accession of Alexander, 336 B C** When Philip was cut off in the midst of his schemes, none knew what was going to happen. It was not likely that so great a son would follow so great a father. The general feeling was one of relief and joy, alike among the barbarian subjects and among the Greek allies of Macedon. The war-party at Athens were filled with indecent exultation, till Phocion damped their ardour with a douche of cold water. "Nothing", said he, "shows greater meanness of spirit than to express joy at the death of an enemy. The army you fought at Chaeroneia is diminished by only one man."

Yet at Athens and elsewhere there was an immediate movement towards revolt. The young king, only twenty years old, soon showed one of his most prominent characteristics, his swiftness to strike. His first act was to slay all possible rivals for the throne and their supporters, no unusual thing in Macedon. His next was to march suddenly south. The moment he appeared with 30,000 men the rebellious spirit collapsed, and even the Athenians sent an embassy to meet him. Alexander, who had no desire to be delayed by a war in Greece, ignored the recent insults and graciously received the general submission. The congress was summoned at Corinth, and Philip's son was elected general of Hellas in Philip's place.

**Northern campaigns** Yet before he could start for Asia Alexander had other work to do. Illyria and Thrace were in a dangerous mood and needed chastisement. The Thracians were the first to feel the weight of his arm. Rapidly he made his way across Mt Rhodope, forced a passage over Mt Haemus by the modern Schipka pass, and defeated

the Triballi of Bulgaria with great loss. Their women and children had been sent to the Scythians on the north side of the Danube, but Alexander crossed the river and scattered the Scythian host. Immediately the tribes of the district submitted in terror, and the king hastened home to repel the Illyrians. Into the western mountains he plunged, and one fierce night-attack upon the enemy's camp concluded the campaign.

**Destruction of Thebes, 335 B.C.** During Alexander's absence in the north, Persian gold had been flowing freely into the cities of Greece in the hopes that a rising there might avert the attack upon the East. News came that the young king had been slain in Thrace. Immediately the Thebans besieged the Macedonian garrison in the Cadmeia, and Athens and other states prepared to join in the revolt. But, ere the siege had been long in progress, the Thebans were thunder-struck by the information that Alexander himself, alive, was within a few miles of their city. In less than a fortnight he had marched some 300 miles from Illyria to Boeotia, outstripping all news of his advance. He defeated the Thebans outside their walls and entered the gates with the fugitives. Six thousand were slain before the butchery stopped. Then doom was pronounced against Thebes. The remnant of the men with the women and children, 30,000 in all, were sold into slavery, the Cadmeia was still occupied by a Macedonian force, every other wall and building, with the exception of the temples and the house of the poet Pindar, was levelled with the ground.

With this one fearful lesson Alexander was content. When the Athenians hastily reversed their policy and sent an embassy to congratulate him on the just punishment of Thebes, he demanded only the surrender of Demosthenes and the leaders of the war-party, and even this penalty was soon reduced to the banishment of one man alone. No doubt Alexander was swayed by the same motives as his father, and the terror inspired by the fate of Thebes allowed him to be generous.

The Asiatic campaign, 334 B.C. The king was now free to accomplish his heart's desire. His object was twofold. Like Philip and many another Greek he wished to avenge upon Persia all that she had done to Hellas. But there was more than that. He combined the spirit of the crusading knight-errant with the exploring zeal of the Elizabethan adventurer. He thirsted to explore the world to its uttermost limits and to plant Hellenism on the shores of Ocean's stream that flowed around the earth. Philip had forged the weapon, it was to be wielded by Philip's son. Already the general Parmenio had crossed the Hellespont and opened the gate of Asia. Leaving the government of Greece in the hands of Antipater, who was supported by more than a third of the Macedonian army, Alexander himself with 30,000 foot and 5000 horse, Macedonians, Greeks, Thracians, and Illyrians, crossed from Sestos to Abydos to meet the myriads of the East.

Visit to Troy. His first action was to visit the site of Troy. His mother and his earliest tutor had imbued him with the spirit of the *Iliad*, and had taught him that he was the descendant of Achilles. Since he was now about to carry on the work which had been begun on the plains of Troy a thousand years before, he honoured the tomb of his ancestor with sacrifice and due solemnities, and then he hastened forward to his task.

Unreadiness of Persia. The last of the kings of Persia was named Darius, but he was neither statesman nor general nor even a brave man, nor did he display any of the qualities of his great namesake. The Persian power was personal, and the personal weakness of the ruler meant the weakness of the empire. Its only strength lay in its vast hoards of wealth, its numbers, and its distances. But the bubble of greatness was now to be pricked. In spite of ample warning, Darius had done nothing for his own defence. No Phoenician fleet was there to bar the passage of the Hellespont. It had been left to the western satraps to do their best. Together they had formed a mixed force of 20,000 horse under various generals,

and 10,000 Greek mercenary hoplites led by Memnon of Rhodes.

**Battle of the Granicus, 334 B.C.** With foolish jealousy the Persian officers scorned Memnon's advice to fall back before the enemy to the interior and starve him into defeat, instead they drew up their forces where the cavalry could not act, on the steep banks of the shallow river Granicus, with the infantry useless behind.

Alexander always drew up his troops in the same fashion. The foot-guards, a picked corps of light Macedonian infantry, and the heavy Macedonian cavalry occupied the right, headed by the "royal squadron" of horse-guards under the command of Cleitus, and supported by light-armed troops. On the left rode the Thessalian and other horse with similar support. In the centre marched the phalanx of heavy infantry. Alexander himself led the right, Parmenio the left, Menander and Antigonus the centre.

Plunging into the stream at the head of his troops, the king scrambled out upon the further side and found himself amidst a fierce *mêlée*. For a moment Alexander's own life was in danger, but Cleitus saved him by cutting down a Persian who was about to stab him in the back. The battle did not last long: the Persian cavalry were routed, the phalanx broke the mercenaries, and, with the cavalry, inflicted fearful slaughter, and at the cost of but few lives to himself Alexander had cleared the road into Asia Minor.

**Conquest of Asia Minor.** Yet he dared not advance at once. The Phoenician fleet had at last arrived, and, relying upon its support, the cities of the coast prepared to resist. Sardis and Ephesus indeed passed without trouble into his hands, but Miletus had to be stormed, and Memnon held out in Halicarnassus for so long that Alexander sent most of the troops into winter-quarters before resuming his march.

**The Gordian knot.** In the spring, having marched through Lycia, he met the various detachments and fresh reinforcements at Gordium, the old capital of Phrygia. There was kept an ancient chariot made, so tradition said, by



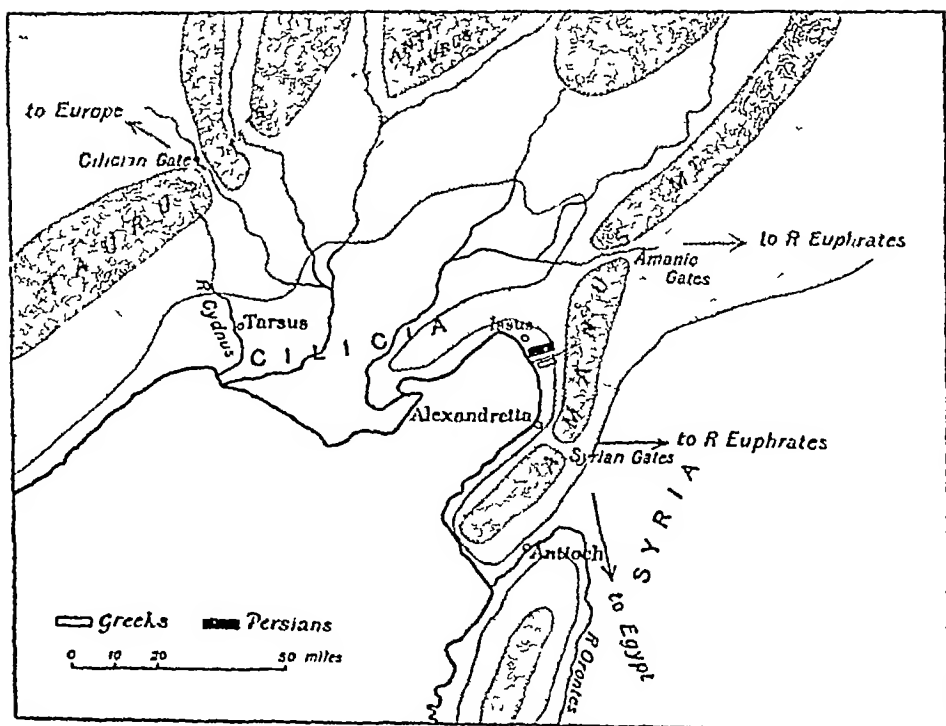
Gordius, the first of the Phrygian kings. The pole was fastened with a knot of bark, and prophecy said that he who unloosed that knot should rule over Asia. Alexander's method was simple: he drew his sword and cut the Gordian knot. A sudden thunderstorm manifested the approval of Zeus.

**Arrival in Cilicia** Thence he marched across the plateau to the Cilician Gates, the only practicable pass which leads across the Taurus range. As the army approached, the cowardly defenders fled, and the Macedonians without a struggle reached Tarsus in the plains of Cilicia. Here Alexander nearly died as the result of a chill brought on by bathing while hot in the cold waters of the river Cydnus. As he lay sick he received a letter warning him against his doctor Philippus, to show his faith in him he drank the medicine which he gave and then showed him the letter—and quickly recovered.

**Battle of Issus, 333 B.C.** Darius was now approaching with a Persian host to be numbered by hundreds of thousands, the most formidable part, however, consisted of 30,000 Greek mercenaries. Between him and Alexander lay the range of Amanus, which separates Cilicia from Syria. Two passes penetrate the barrier: the more difficult northern one, the Amanic Gates, goes over the mountains directly, the easier road runs by Issus along a narrow coast-plain between the mountains and the sea, and then leads over the range by the Syrian Gates. For a time Darius halted in the Syrian plain, where he could use his numbers, but, when his enemy did not come, he crossed by the Amanic Gates to look for him. At the same moment Alexander, leaving his sick at Issus, marched towards the Syrian Gates. The Persians then moved south, captured and put to death the Macedonian sick, and occupied the coast route.

Alexander was in a dangerous position, cut off from all possibility of retreat. Back he went to meet the foe and found them posted along a stream which flows across the narrow plain of Issus. The town of Alexandretta was afterwards founded by him near the spot. In such a position their

numbers were useless and his own front would be the same length as theirs. Flinging himself and the cavalry of the right upon the Persian infantry, he broke into them, but the phalanx could gain little ground against the Greek mercenaries of the centre, and Parmenio with the Thessalian horse on the left by the sea was even forced back by the Persian cavalry. Alexander's charge, however, won the day: the light infantry of the foot-guards with him wheeled upon the flank of the



MAP 13 BATTLE OF ISSUS, 333 B C

mercenaries, and the cavalry made for the spot where Darius was seated in his chariot. Terroi-stricken the Great King turned and fled, and his whole army copied his example, never stopping till they had crossed the northern pass and were back in the Syrian plain. Thousands fell in the pursuit, and the Persian camp with all its wealth and the mother, wife, and family of Darius were left in the victors' hands. All this at a cost of 450 men! The royal ladies were treated with the

utmost courtesy as befitted their rank, but were retained as valuable hostages. Darius offered for their ransom 10,000 talents<sup>1</sup>, the hand of his daughter, and all the land west of the Euphrates. "I should accept if I were Alexander," cried Parmenio. "So should I if I were Parmenio," replied the king. But he entertained no thoughts of making peace.

**Siege of Tyre** Two courses were now open to the conqueror. He might follow up his victory by striking at the heart of Persia, he could turn southwards to Syria and Egypt first. He resolved upon the latter plan. His own fleet was small and had been sent home after Halicarnassus, the Phoenician ships still ruled the sea, he could deal with them best by capturing their ports. Southwards then he went. The cities opened their gates. Even Tyre offered submission, but refused to admit him when he wished to enter the city to sacrifice at the famous shrine of Heracles. Alexander determined to enter by force. But the task was no easy one. Like Motya, the Phoenician stronghold in Sicily, the town lay upon an island half a mile from the coast, enormous walls rose from the water to a height of 150 feet where they faced the mainland, the two harbours of the island were filled with ships.

The first thing to do was to drive a mole out to the city. In the shallow water the work progressed rapidly, but in the deep channel under the walls the workmen were exposed to the missiles from the city and the attacks of the Tyrian ships. Towers and engines were erected on the end of the causeway, but a fireship destroyed the works. Alexander then sent for ships from Sidon and the other towns which had submitted, and the Cyprians deserted the failing Persian cause and brought him 120 vessels more. He now blockaded the Tyrians within their harbours, the mole was carried up to the wall, and engines were erected against it. Yet even then its prodigious strength and the vigour of the defence defied the efforts of his engineers. At last in the seventh month of the siege he ordered a grand assault. Engines were mounted in merchant

<sup>1</sup> £2,400,000

ships, and vessels were manned with troops. A simultaneous attack was made upon all sides of the island, and the triremes forced the harbours. Headed by the king himself the Macedonians burst in, and Tyre was taken. As many as 8000 were slain in the defence, 30,000 were sold into slavery.

**Siege of Gaza.** Palestine and the Philistine coast gave no trouble, with the exception of Gaza, a strong fortress upon a hill. Batis, the governor, refused to surrender, and the engineers said the place was impregnable. But ramparts were thrown up, the artillery was mounted, the walls were undermined, and after three months the city fell. Alexander could be chivalrous towards Persian women, but, like his model Achilles with the corpse of Hector, he cruelly bound Batis to the tail of his chariot and dragged him along till he died.

**Egypt.** In their hatred of Persia the Egyptians welcomed the conqueror as a deliverer. He marched up the river to Memphis, the capital (near Cairo), did sacrifice to the native gods, and then sailed down the western branch of the Nile to the sea. There he founded the city of Alexandria, destined to be for centuries the most important centre of commerce and of Hellenic life. Whilst he was there he visited the oracle of Zeus Ammon at an oasis in the desert. The kings of Egypt were officially sons of Ammon, and it suited the policy of the successor of the Pharaohs as well as the pride of the descendant of Achilles, the son of Thetis, to be saluted as divine.

**Battle of Arbela or Gaugamela, 331 B.C.** In the spring Alexander returned. At Tyre he halted to prepare for another of those wonderful campaigns in which he never but once went astray or failed to have supplies and organisation complete. When all was ready he marched to the Euphrates, crossed it at Thapsacus, and passed the Tigris too, so as to avoid the heat of the Mesopotamian desert. Continuing down its left bank he reached Gaugamela, close to Arbela and not far from the site of Nineveh. Here Darius lay encamped with 1,000,000 foot and 40,000 horse, the cavalry alone being nearly as numerous as the whole Greek army. Alexander's troops were drawn up in the usual way, but, since he was

certain to be outflanked in the wide plain, a second line was drawn up behind each wing to face to the flank or the rear

The battle began with a sharp cavalry engagement on the right of the Greeks. Then the Persian scythed chariots charged with a rattle and din, but they were received with showers of arrows and javelins, men leapt to the horses' heads and pulled them down, and the infantry opened their ranks to let the terror whirl through. Alexander now saw his chance. With his cavalry of the right he charged into a gap in the enemy's host and wheeled to take their centre in the flank, while the phalanx moved against their front. The story of Issus was repeated. As Darius saw the enemy drawing nearer and nearer, he turned and fled, accompanied by all who saw his flight. In the centre, however, two regiments of the phalanx were separated, and through the gap rode some Indian and Persian horse, but, when they set to plundering the Macedonian camp, the Thracians of the rear-guard closed upon them and drove them out. For a while Parmenio on the left was hard beset and sent for help. Alexander at once gave up the pursuit and hastened to his rescue, but, ere he arrived, in that part too the battle was won. The mighty host of the East now melted away, at a cost of 500 lives Alexander's army of 47,000 men had slain well nigh their own number and scattered a million. Darius himself fled to Ecbatana in the highlands of Media, and the Persian empire fell to pieces, the only resistance being such as each satrap or tribe might choose to offer.

**Capture of Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis** When Alexander resumed his triumphal progress, Babylon opened its gates and welcomed him. Nor did Susa, the favourite residence of the Persian kings, show any opposition. There he found enormous spoils, including a sum of 50,000 talents<sup>1</sup>. Yet, though it was winter, onwards he pressed to the heart of Persia itself. Ariobarzanes, with a force raised from the wreck of Arbela, defended the only road by the Persian Gates. The position was as strong as that of Thermopylae, and

<sup>1</sup> £12,000,000

Alexander failed But history repeats itself A prisoner told of a perilous mountain path Marching by night along the snowy track, Alexander led half his men to the rear of the Persian position The Macedonian trumpet sounded Down rushed the king upon the sleeping camp, while Craterus stormed the pass in front The defenders were cut to pieces, and Persepolis, the cradle of the Persian race, with its magnificent temples, palaces, and tombs, was in the victor's hands Here even greater was the hoard of wealth, no less than 120,000 talents<sup>1</sup> being found in the treasury Few incidents in the conqueror's career are better known than the burning of the palace of Xerxes Whether it was a deliberate act of vengeance, or whether it was the result of a drunken impulse, we cannot decide, the story is told both ways In either case it is one of the blots upon Alexander's fame One night the king and his nobles drank deep In the midst of their cups the beautiful Thais suggested the burning of the palace as a splendid revenge The wild revellers, their spirits heated with wine and victory, snatched up torches and, led by the king himself, fired the cedar columns The excitement spread, and the city was given over to pillage and massacre Too late Alexander repented and tried to stop the destruction

Organisation of Alexander's empire The first act of Alexander's campaigns was now finished, he had accomplished the work to do which he had set out; but the lust of conquest and exploration had grown upon him Yet, before he could start to win the unknown regions further east, he had to organise the empire which he had already gained His followers at least, and perhaps the king himself, had left Greece with the notion that the East was a land of fabulous wealth and servile population, of which they were to become the masters However, as he progressed, a wiser plan grew in the mind of the conqueror Everywhere new cities were planted to become the centres of a Hellenized East, but he would be the Great King as well as the king of Macedonia

<sup>1</sup> £18,800,000

To some extent his successes turned his head, he trifled with the idea that he was divine, and the despotic magnificence of an Oriental monarchy was not without attractions. Yet it was also his deliberate policy, not merely that the West should conquer the East, but that East and West should mingle. Accordingly he conciliated the religious and national feelings of the people wherever he went, among the Orientals he adopted the customs and dress of the East, and in appointing governors he associated a Greek general with a native satrap, each to watch the other. As was natural, his Macedonians loathed this tendency, and before the end their jealousy culminated in open mutiny.

**Pursuit and death of Darius, 330 B.C.** Having made arrangements for his absence, Alexander set forward again. His first object was to capture Darius himself. With extraordinary speed he made for Ecbatana, but when he reached the Median capital the bird had flown. Paying off generously all his Greek allies who wished to return home, and leaving behind Parmenio with the treasure, he started eastwards in pursuit. While he marched he learnt that Darius had been made a prisoner by his ambitious cousin, Bessus, satrap of Bactria<sup>1</sup>, who plotted to succeed him. On he hastened with the cavalry by night and day, till men and horses alike were dropping with weariness. At last he caught the enemy up. Bessus and his friends mounted their horses, but Darius refused, they stabbed him and fled. Alexander treated the corpse with pity and honour, and sent it to Persepolis for burial.

**Conquest of Bactria.** The next year was spent in the conquest of Bactria. Bessus had taken the title of Artaxerxes and proclaimed himself king. Space forbids to tell how Alexander penetrated the wilds of Asia, founding new Alexandrias such as Herat and Candahar, crossing the Hindu-Kush in winter, floating his men on skins across the Oxus, till Bessus was captured, mutilated, and impaled in Persian fashion in his own capital of Balkh.

<sup>1</sup> Northern Afghanistan

**Execution of Parmenio** During this campaign Alexander committed one of his crimes Philotas, son of Parmenio, commander of the heavy cavalry, had been free in criticism Suddenly he was charged with plotting to murder the king Under torture he confessed to knowing about a plot He was executed promptly, and messengers were sent to Ecbatana, and Parmenio was put to death without trial

**Conquest of Sogdiana** Alexander next turned his arms against Sogdiana<sup>1</sup>, the extreme province of the Persian realm, lying beyond the Oxus The Scythians of this district proved dangerous foes, but Alexander overcame them and fixed the limits of his empire at "Alexandria-the-furthest", on the banks of the Jaxartes, at the point where it issues from the central Asian plateau and has ever provided the natural pass for Mongol hordes invading the West

**Murder of Cleitus** While Alexander was at Samarcand in Sogdiana repressing attempts at revolt, a terrible incident happened. His Oriental manners, his marriage with Roxana, a beautiful Bactrian, and the enrolling of Asiatics among the Macedonian regiments, had infuriated his own troops One night the king and his officers were drinking deep, while minstrels poured forth the flattery that he loved Thereupon Cleitus broke out it was to Philip's army and generals, to Philotas and Parmenio, that Alexander's victories were due; he himself at the Granicus had saved Alexander's life The taunt was undeserved, but had sufficient truth to sting Alexander sprang up and called for the guards His friends held him back, while others forced the officer from the room But, bursting free, Cleitus staggered back with more words of abuse, and Alexander thrust him through with a spear Instantly the king's drunken fury was turned to bitter remorse, and for three days he would neither eat nor sleep The act remains an indelible stain upon his character

**Invasion of India, 327—326 B.C.** His next campaign was directed against India Crossing the Hindu-Kush again, he reached Cabul, and halted to re-organise his force and direct

<sup>1</sup> Turkestan.



his empire from his camp, his moving capital. The number of Greeks in his army had been much reduced by war, disease, and the founding of new cities, yet reinforcements from home and large levies from central Asia brought it up again beyond its original strength. Following the Cabul river he made his way through the Khyber pass. While his friend Hephaestion went on to secure the passage of the Indus and build a bridge, the king himself, in order to secure his communications, directed a winter campaign against the hill-tribes of the north-west frontier of India.

In the spring he halted at the Indus, which he meant to be his boundary, but it was necessary to advance beyond it and set up vassal states to secure his frontiers. The great river was crossed without opposition, but on the banks of the Hydaspes<sup>1</sup> he was faced by Porus, king of the Punjab, with a large army and his war-elephants, the sight and smell of which the horses could not endure. To cross directly was impossible. But a series of feints threw Porus off his guard, and, leaving Craterus with half the force to distract the enemy, Alexander marched the rest some miles up stream by night, and safely made the passage with his horsemen and light infantry. Porus soon arrived and drew up his troops, the 200 elephants in front of the infantry, the cavalry on either wing. Alexander, with all his horsemen on the right, attacked the enemy's cavalry and drove them in, while his infantry suffered severely from the elephant charges. But when he closed and assailed them in the flank, the unwieldy beasts could not turn to face both ways, and, infuriated by wounds, they began to trample down the Indian infantry and threw them into confusion. Pressing home his attack, Alexander put the enemy to flight, and Craterus, who had now crossed the river, came up to join in the pursuit. Porus, on his own elephant, was the last to retire, and fell into the victor's hands. "Treat me like a king," said he, and Alexander treated him generously. His kingdom was increased

<sup>1</sup> Jhelum

and given back, as a vassal state of Macedon, with Greek cities planted in its midst

**Mutiny** Alexander then continued his advance, but when he reached the banks of the Hyphasis<sup>1</sup> he met with an unexpected check. His Greek troops flatly refused to cross the river. They had conquered enough, they were weary of campaigning, they longed for home. Persuasion and anger were equally useless. At last the king gave his reluctant consent to turn back, and his promise was hailed with shouts and tears of joy.

**Voyage down the Indus** After building twelve altars to the gods of Olympus and offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving, Alexander set out upon his return. At the Hydaspes he picked up Hephaestion and Craterus, who had been founding cities and building a fleet, and then set sail down the stream, some of the troops marching on either bank.

At Multan he nearly lost his life. Leading his men as usual, he and three others had scaled the wall, when the ladder broke. But the four leapt down and, with their backs to the wall, defended themselves desperately. One was slain, and the king was wounded in the chest and fainted from loss of blood, the other two stood over him till his followers scrambled up. At first it was thought he was dead, and the army was overwhelmed with grief. When he had sufficiently recovered to show himself, their wild joy testified to the devotion with which they regarded their leader.

As soon as he was strong enough the journey was resumed. In the district of Scinde there was plenty of fighting to do, and it was many weeks before he reached the Indian Ocean. There another colony (Hyderabad) was founded at the head of the delta, to be the port of Indian trade.

**The return, 325 B.C.** Then the expedition was split into three parts. Craterus and most of the troops were sent by the Bolan pass to subdue a revolt in southern Afghanistan, and so march back to Babylon, Nearchus and the fleet were bidden

<sup>1</sup> Sutlej

to explore the shores of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, Alexander himself plunged into the unknown deserts of Beluchistan to find a route by the coast and establish *depôts* for the fleet. The march was disastrous. The track lay over a barren waste of burning sand and rock, so fearful was the heat that only at night could they move, it was sometimes forty miles from well to well, provisions ran short, the animals died, and the sick and the stragglers were left behind to perish. Alexander himself marched on foot and shared every hardship. The story is told that once, when a helmet-full of water was with difficulty collected and given to him, he poured the precious liquid on the ground rather than have a luxury which his soldiers could not share. It was two months before the desert was passed and fertile country reached, but only a quarter of his force struggled through to the end, the losses were greater than all that he had hitherto sustained.

**Punishment of injustice** When Alexander returned to Susa, his first task was to punish the misconduct of the satraps and governors, Greeks and Persians alike. Justice was vindicated with unsparing hand. Many officials were deposed or put to death, and no less than 600 soldiers were executed for plundering the temples and tombs of Media.

**Alexander's policy** Alexander then set to work to organise his Eur-Asiatic empire. A thirst for conquest he certainly had, but the bounds of his realm were reasonable in spite of their vast extent. From the moment that Sardis fell into his hands he was forced to go on, while any of the Persian empire existed, there would be an endeavour to wrest from him what he had taken. The Jaxartes, the Indus, and the Nile therefore had to be reached. When this was done it was impossible to return home. His empire must be ruled from the centre, not from Macedonia. At Babylon accordingly he determined to reside as an Eur-Asiatic king.

In pursuance of this policy he had founded Alexandrias in every land, so that the culture of Greece might be grafted



Alexander the Great  
(This head is in the British Museum)



upon the people of the East The population of the towns was mixed, disbanded Greek soldiers and Greek merchants amidst a native element He himself led the way in the mingling of the races Roxana his wife was a Bactrian, he now married Statira also, the daughter of Darius, while Hephaestion wedded her sister, and on the same day a large number of Macedonian officers took the daughters of Persian nobles to wife The example was rapidly copied, for 10,000 of the soldiery did the same and were liberally rewarded by the king That his policy was right was proved by its success, for Persia and Greece were never again at war After his early death it was Greek kingdoms that arose upon the ruins of his empire, Greek was the common language of the East till the days of Mohammed, and even in India Greek kings ruled until the birth of Christ.

**The mutiny of the troops** But the king's policy found no favour with the Macedonians What annoyed them most was the enrolment of Oriental officers and men in the army and even in the Macedonian regiments and the body-guard The slaves they had conquered were made their equals The discontent soon broke out into open mutiny Alexander formally discharged 10,000 veterans and proposed to send them home laden with gifts To his dismay the shout broke out, "Discharge us all" Instantly he pointed out thirteen ringleaders and bade his guards put them to death Then amidst a deep silence he mounted the platform, and, after reminding the army what he and his father had done for them, took them at their word and gave them their discharge After this he retired to his palace for three days, associating only with Medes and Persians and giving to them positions of trust The scheme was effective Miserable and repentant, the army begged for forgiveness, and the king and his troops were reconciled

**Death of Hephaestion** At the end of the year a great sorrow fell upon him While he was at Ecbatana holding a festival, his great friend, Hephaestion, died Alexander was inconsolable A general mourning was ordered throughout

the empire, and the funeral at Babylon is said to have cost 10,000 talents<sup>1</sup>

**Death of Alexander, 323 B.C.** Into Babylon the seers advised him not to enter; but he brushed their warnings aside. Babylon was to be his capital. Many schemes were in his head, the exploration of the Caspian, the invasion of Italy, an attack upon Carthage. But his immediate plans consisted of the development of Babylon as a port and the conquest of Arabia by sea. In connection with this he spent some time in the marshes near the mouth of the Euphrates. His visit proved fatal. Soon after his return to Babylon he gave a banquet in honour of Nearchus, who was about to depart on the Arabian expedition. Alexander drank deep, and next day slept late. When he awoke, a fever, caught in the marshes, was upon him. Day by day he grew worse. On the tenth day he was speechless, and, when his Macedonian soldiers clamoured to see their beloved leader and were allowed to file past his bed, the most he could do was to make a slight movement of his head to greet them. The next evening at the age of thirty-two the Conqueror of the East passed away.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 What effect have Alexander's conquests had upon the world's history?
- 4 Was Alexander a great statesman?
- 5 With what historical characters would you compare him?
- 6 What were his virtues and his faults?

<sup>1</sup> £2,400,000



7d  
miles





## CHAPTER XXVI

## THE SUCCESSORS OF ALEXANDER

**Changes in Greece** With the death of Alexander Greek history undergoes a change. Hitherto we have dealt with a Greece composed of a number of little city-states, intensely jealous of their independence, each developing on its own lines in politics and civilisation and working out its own destiny. Suddenly appeared the overwhelming might of the Macedonian monarchy, which crushed the old system to the ground and spread Hellenism itself to the Nile and the Indus. Henceforward Greece itself was to hold only two city-states, Athens and Sparta, which tried to pursue their way with what peace and freedom they could, and two leagues, the Achæan and the Aetolian, whose members respectively combined in the attempt to retain their independence. In the larger Greek world which Alexander had made, the chief place was taken, not by towns, but by men trying to carve out empires for themselves. Space forbids the attempt to tell the history of these larger monarchies, the last three chapters of this book will merely sketch the general state of Greek affairs till the conquest by the Romans.

**Temporary arrangements** Alexander's death was the signal for chaos. Over his corpse on the death-bed there broke out a quarrel among his generals. He left no son, but Roxana, his queen, was with child, and in Macedonia there was an imbecile half-brother named Philip. The generals were anxious to obtain power for themselves, but the army insisted upon a successor to the monarchy. At length it was agreed that Philip should be declared king and that Roxana's child, if a boy, should share the kingdom with him. Perdikkas was to be Protector of the realm, while the administration of the provinces was to be divided among the leading officers.

When this was settled, the funeral of the dead king took place with great pomp and magnificence, and a golden car carried his remains to Alexandria in Egypt for burial

**Athenian affairs** Even while Alexander was alive there had been trouble in Greece. The Spartans had led a Peloponnesian revolt, but had been crushed near Megalopolis by Antipater, the governor of Macedonia. Athens had taken no part, but Aeschines thought the moment favourable for dealing a blow at his enemies by prosecuting the man who had proposed a golden civic crown for Demosthenes' patriotic services. The brilliant speeches of both the orators still exist, but Aeschines failed and had to leave Athens. Not long afterwards Demosthenes too was driven out. Antipater charged him with receiving bribes from Harpalus, Alexander's treasurer, who had absconded with much wealth from Ecbatana, and the Athenians thought it wise to fine him heavily. Unable to pay he fled into exile.

During this time Phocion's influence was in the ascendant, and he had even prevailed upon Demosthenes to check his warlike utterances. Another, too, of the war-party, the orator Lycurgus, was at least peaceful while trying to develop the resources of the state. Under his able management as minister of finance the silver mines of Laurium, closed since the Spartan occupation of Deceleia, were re-opened. Thus provided with funds, Lycurgus increased the fleet to 400 triremes and filled the dockyards with stores, restored the citizen-army by a system of national training for those who were between nineteen and twenty-one years of age, constructed the Pan-Athenaic stadium, and rebuilt the theatre of Dionysus. Corinth was held by the Macedonians, Thebes had ceased to exist, Athens was thus left undisturbed by the jealousy of rivals.

**The Aetolian League** In Northern Greece a new power had arisen. The rude highlanders of Aetolia were 300 years behind the rest of Greece. Dwelling in unwall'd villages, a group of which in one valley formed a tribe, or canton, they lived upon their flocks and herds and agriculture and the

plunder of their neighbours. These cantons had long been loosely knit together, but, finding their independence threatened by Macedon, they drew closer the ties of their League in the interests of freedom, brigandage, and piracy. At the head was a "strategus", or general, aided by other officers. Their duty was to carry out the decrees of the council, and of the assembly of all Aetolians which met at least once a year at Thermon.

The Lamian war, 323—322 B.C. Both Athenians and Aetolians had been unsettled by an order from Susa to receive back all exiles, an order which involved the restitution of property. A few months later came the news of Alexander's death. Immediately a revolt broke out. At Athens Demosthenes was recalled, and a force of citizens and mercenaries under Leosthenes was sent to hold Thermopylae. The Aetolians joined them there, and others of the northern states sent assistance, but the Peloponnesians, fearing the Macedonians in the Acrocorinthus, gave no help. Antipater advanced from Macedonia, but was checked in the Spercheus valley and threw himself into Lamia. There he held out for months against repeated assaults, in one of which Leosthenes was slain, until the coming of reinforcements raised the siege and enabled him to fall back into Thessaly. Soon he was further strengthened by the arrival of Craterus from Asia, and at Crannon he inflicted a slight defeat upon the Greeks.

Negotiations for peace were opened. Antipater with great cunning said he would deal only with separate states. At once the alliance flew to pieces. The Aetolians returned home and from their mountains defied the Macedonians, but Athens sent Phocion to beg for terms. Antipater was more stern than his late master. A Macedonian garrison was to be placed in Munychia, the poorer citizens, who, having nothing to lose, would lightly vote for war, were to be disfranchised, Demosthenes and the leaders of the war-party were to be given up. The terms were accepted, and Demosthenes, who had fled to sanctuary, poisoned himself to avoid arrest.

Phocion did not long survive his opponent. A few years

later he was charged with having betrayed the city to the Macedonians. He never had been popular, for the advocate of peace rarely meets with applause, it was only his rare honesty and incorruptibility that won him influence, the Athenian people he treated with undisguised scorn. "I like nothing that you do," he cried to them. He was condemned to death amidst howls of execration, and drank the poisoned cup.

After the Lamian war the political history of Athens is a blank. She had learnt the lesson and interfered no more with outside affairs. As far as possible she tried to preserve her independence, but more often than not she was a shuttlecock in the game of kings. Yet though passed from hand to hand, conquered by one king, freed by another, the city prospered quietly, for all alike wished not to harm her but to possess her, recognising in her the true centre of Hellenic life and thought.

**The "Diadochi"** We must now glance for a moment at the successors of Alexander, the "Diadochi" as they are called. For more than forty years a chaotic fight was waged amongst them. Perdikkas, who tried to keep the kingdom together for the son that Roxana did bear, was murdered by his own men. Then every general fought for his own hand. As was to be expected, Philip, the half-witted king, did not live long, and Roxana and her son, before he came of age, ceased to exist.

The chief struggle then raged between Antigonos of Phrygia on the one side, helped by his son Demetrius Poliorcetes, "the besieger of cities", and on the other side Antipater's son Cassander, who held Macedonia, allied with Lysimachus in Thrace, Seleucus in Babylon, and Ptolemy in Egypt. For a while Antigonos was successful against the rest by land and dominated most of western Asia. He also took the title of king, an example followed by his competitors. Demetrius with a fleet drove out the Macedonians from Athens and posed as its deliverer. Corinth and the Peloponnese fell into his hands. He besieged Salamis in Cyprus, won a great victory over the Egyptian fleet which

hastened to the rescue, and conquered the island. Then he turned against Rhodes which had insisted upon remaining neutral. The siege is famous in the annals of warfare. Amongst Demetrius' engines was an ironclad wooden tower called an "helepolis", a "city-taker". It was 75 ft square at the base and 150 ft high, with 9 storeys full of artillery. Mounted on wheels, it could be moved in any direction by the efforts of 3400 men. The battering-rams too excited astonishment. They were as much as 190 ft. long and needed 1000 men to work them. But the Rhodians made a desperate defence, even slaves and women helped to man the walls, and Demetrius gave up the siege and presented his "helepolis" to the defenders.

The career of Antigonus was brought to an end in the year 301 B.C. by his defeat and death at Ipsus in Phrygia, and his possessions were divided among his rivals. Demetrius after a roving piratical life, in the course of which he was for a while king of Macedonia, fell into the hands of Seleucus and drank himself to death in captivity. Finally about 278 B.C., after a series of wars and murders, matters were further simplified, and there emerged three definite kingdoms. Macedonia was in the hands of Demetrius' son, Antigonus Gonatas, Syria, sometimes including most of western Asia, belonged to the descendants of Seleucus, Egypt was held by the Ptolemies.

Agathocles, 317—289 B.C. While these self-seeking monarchs were struggling in the East, there appeared in the West a similar adventurer. Agathocles was of Rhegium by descent, but, like so many men of the day, he became a mercenary and offered his sword to the highest bidder. At one time he had been in the service of Syracuse and had formed the design of carving out a monarchy for himself. When in 317 B.C. Carthage was once more active, the Syracusans hired him again and made him commander-in-chief. He struck immediately. As the champion of the masses he put to death 4000 of the oligarchs, drove out 6000 more, and thus established his position and the policy by which he continued to rule.

He next attacked the Sicilian towns and the Carthaginians, but his success was only partial, and he suffered a severe defeat upon the Himeia. Yet, instead of waiting to defend Syracuse, with amazing boldness he slipped through a blockading fleet, sailed for Africa, and carried the war into the enemy's country, where his first act was to burn his ships and commit himself irrevocably. Disunion among the Carthaginians themselves and the hatred of their subjects gave him his opportunity, and for four years he was master of the land up to the walls of Carthage itself. Meantime at Syracuse the Carthaginians had blockaded the town by land and sea and driven the inhabitants to despair, till the capture of their general, Hamilcar, forced them to break up the siege.

Yet the prospects of Agathocles at home looked none too well, for the Acragantines stood forward as the champions of Hellenic freedom against Syracuse and Carthage alike. Presently he found it necessary to visit Sicily to restore his falling fortunes. This was the signal for disaster in Africa. His son was defeated, and not even his own return could win success. His army turned against him, and he deserted it, leaving his son to be slain by the furious soldiery. Concluding peace with Carthage, he spent the remaining years of his life in trying to enforce his authority in Sicily and southern Italy by a series of murders, tortures, robberies, and bloody massacres. He was finally poisoned in 289 B.C. by his own grandson, leaving Sicily, as Pyrrhus afterwards said, "a battlefield for the Romans and Carthaginians."

**The Gauls** About this time southern Europe received a warning that its day might be ended suddenly by the forces of the North. The mountainous regions of central Europe were disturbed, and hosts of its fair-haired inhabitants, the Celts, were issuing upon the plains. The movement which brought invading tribes of Gaels and Britons to our islands and gave to France its name of Gallia, was likely to overwhelm the Mediterranean shores. Northern Italy was full of Gauls, and in 390 B.C. they had sacked Rome. Alexander on the Danube, and again in Babylon, had received Celtic envoys, who came

to express friendship but not to make submission In 280 B.C. they descended upon Macedonia and Thrace, the quarrels of whose rulers gave the invaders their opportunity. Two years later they raided the heart of Greece The Aetolians drove off with bloody slaughter those who invaded their land, but Brennus and his warriors turned the Athenian position at Thermopylae and reached Delphi itself Whether, as the story says, the god shook the land and the falling rocks crushed the robbers to death, or, as is more likely, they carried off their booty, at least the invaders retired Finally they turned south-eastwards, crossed the Hellespont, and, under the name of Galatians, settled down as a nation of brigands in Phrygia

**The Achaean League** The Aetolian League, by controlling Thermopylae and the Amphictyonic Council and working in alliance with Athens, did much to prevent Macedonia from keeping a firm hold upon Greece However, by garrisoning his three "fetters of Greece", the Acrocorinthus, Chalcis, and Demetrias, which Demetrius had built on a hill close to the site of Pagasae, Antigonus Gonatas had his own water-way and exercised considerable influence Athens was once taken in spite of Egyptian help, and in most of the Peloponnesian towns tyrants governed in the interests of Macedon Provoked by this interference, the ancient League of the Achaean cities was revived Its constitution was similar to that of the Aetolians, for it had a general at its head, a council, and an assembly of all Achaean citizens, but there was this difference, that, instead of being a democratic league of brigands, it was a confederacy of thriving towns interested in keeping up the rights of property

In 251 B.C. Aratus of Sicyon, who had been living for years in exile, surprised his native city by night and drove the tyrant out Then he united the town, though not Achaean, with the League He speedily won such popularity that he was elected general Money he got from Egypt, where the Ptolemies were always friendly to any state that would check the power of Macedon By trickery and strategem, by working "in the



dark rather than in the light", he gained many towns for the League. Even Corinth was taken by bribery, and soon almost all the Peloponnese with the exception of Sparta had joined

**Agis and Cleomenes of Sparta** Though Sparta was friendly, she still obstinately adhered to her policy of proud independence. The Spartan state was sunk in decay, but a young king, Agis, arose resolved to restore her former glories. The chief cause of her weakness lay in the fact that the number of Spartan citizens was reduced to 700. Enormous wealth was concentrated in the hands of 100 families, but everyone else was in abject poverty and therefore without the rights of citizenship. To remedy this Agis proposed to cancel all debts, redistribute property among 4000 Spartans and 15,000 Perioeci, and restore the ancient discipline. As an earnest of his intentions he gave all his own wealth to the state. Naturally his socialistic scheme met with violent opposition from the wealthy, and before it was completed he was put to death.

Yet a few years later his ideas were taken up by Cleomenes. A quarrel arose with the Achaeans because Tegea and Mantinea were secured as allies of Sparta rather than of the League. Hostilities followed, and Cleomenes won several successes which caused the League to distrust Aratus. Then, leaving his army abroad, he marched home with a mercenary force, drove out the few remaining Spartan citizens, slew the ephors and abolished their office, and, establishing himself as sole king, carried through the reforms of Agis. The success of the socialist was dangerous to the League, which existed for the benefit of the wealthy class. Spartan victory followed upon victory. The common folk among the Achaeans seemed disposed to accept Cleomenes as a leader, and Aratus to save his own position appealed for Macedonian help.

**Battle of Sellasia, 221 B.C.** Antigonus Gonatas was dead, on behalf of his youthful grandson Philip V, a relative, Antigonus Doson, was acting as regent. Seizing the chance of interference, Antigonus took his army to the Peloponnese and pressed Cleomenes hard. In 221 B.C. the final battle was



**The Discobolus of Myron**

(A free marble copy of the original bronze, now in the Vatican  
Museum Rome)



fought at Sellasia in the north of Laconia. The result was fatal for Sparta: of 20,000 men only 4000 survived the day, Cleomenes fled to Egypt and there took his own life, the Macedonian power was riveted upon the Peloponnese once more.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

1. Make a summary of the chapter.
2. Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
3. Do you see any difference in the characters of the Greeks of this and of an earlier age?
4. Which is the finest character here presented?
5. What types of government appear that are new to Greece?

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE CULTURE OF THE HELLENISTIC AGE

**Pre-eminence of Athens.** In Chapter XV we had a glimpse of the artistic and intellectual life of Athens in the fifth century. We must not suppose that she was the only city that could produce sculptors and architects, poets and philosophers. Yet her pre-eminence was such that almost all men of distinction in art or thought or literature spent some of their years in Athens and associated their life with hers. In the fourth century too she retained her leadership, and, even after the death of Alexander, in the period of decline which is known as the Hellenistic Age, she was still one of the great centres of culture.

**Painting.** Thus the early painter, Polygnotus of Thasos, was employed by Cimon to adorn the Painted Portico. About 400 B.C. Zeuxis and Parrhasius, the greatest artists of the day, though not Athenian by birth, yet did most of their work in Athens. Their art was so life-like, it is said, that they

engaged in a competition. The grapes which Zeuxis painted were so well done that the birds pecked at them. Thereupon Parrhasius bade him draw aside the curtain which concealed his picture. Zeuxis laid his hand upon it—but the curtain was the picture, and he acknowledged his defeat. After them came the greatest of all Greek painters, Apelles. An Ionian by birth, who had studied in Sicily, Apelles spent most of his days, not in Athens, but at the court of Alexander. His portraits especially were famous, in particular those of Alexander himself, but his most renowned picture was one of Aphrodite “Anadyomene” (rising from the sea).

**Sculpture** The earliest of the great sculptors worked mainly in bronze or in ivory and gold. Of Pheidias in the days of Pericles something has already been said. Yet he was not without rivals, and had learnt his art in Argos. It was one of his fellow-pupils, Polycleitus of Argos, who made the famous gold and ivory statue for the temple of Argive Hera. The other, Myion, born on the borders of Attica and Boeotia, was especially famous for representing animals and athletes, his best known work is the “Discobolus”, the man hurling a quoit, of which several copies exist.

In the early fourth century the two greatest names were those of Scopas and Praxiteles, both belonging to the Athenian school of sculpture, though the former was a Parian by birth. Most of Scopas' work was temple statuary, and the remains which we can most easily see are the reliefs from the Mausoleum (see p. 260), now in the British Museum. Praxiteles was especially famous for the grace and softness with which he carved the feminine form. A number of copies of his statues of Aphrodite still prove his genius, and his statue of Hermes at Olympia is one of the few original masterpieces that remain to this day.

In the days of Alexander, Euphranor of Corinth and Lysippus of Sicily had the greatest renown. Both were trained in the Sicilian school of art. Euphranor worked mostly at Athens. Lysippus, who excelled in portraiture, like Apelles was attached to Alexander's court, only the one



*The English Photographic Co*

**The Hermes of Praxiteles**  
(The original statue still at Olympia)



painter and the one sculptor were allowed to portray the king. After 300 B.C. sculpture and painting declined somewhat from their perfection, and, as the result of Alexander's conquests, artistic centres sprang up further east which eclipsed the Athenian school.

**Literature and oratory.** In literature and oratory Athens had been supreme. In the fifth century there had been the poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, and the historians Thucydides and the half-Athenian Herodotus, in the fourth century had flourished Xenophon, the philosophers Plato and Aristotle, and the orators Aeschines and Demosthenes. These famous men, with scores more whose works have mostly or entirely perished, together made a blaze of genius which has dazzled the world ever since. It is true that other towns produced literary men, but they were occasional instances, and no place but Athens could be described as the centre of literature.

Yet in this too there was a serious decline when freedom perished. As in Elizabethan England an outburst of literature coincided with the deliverance from Spain and afterwards died away, so in Athens its vigour and bloom followed the repulse of Persia and then slowly withered. Before the end of the fourth century tragedy had so much declined that it was ordered that the works of the older poets should regularly be performed. Comedy, however, continued to flourish. It was no longer of the old type which caricatured everything in public life, but a "New Comedy" dealing with stock characters and stock subjects of satire drawn from ordinary life.

**The reflection of character in art.** It has often been said that the character of a people is reflected in its art and literature. This was notably the case with the Athenians. After the Persian wars their character was ennobled and purified, their private life was simple and severe, their expenditure was laid out in the service of the gods. As time went on, religion decayed, simple beliefs and simple life were out of date, men grew to care for making money and

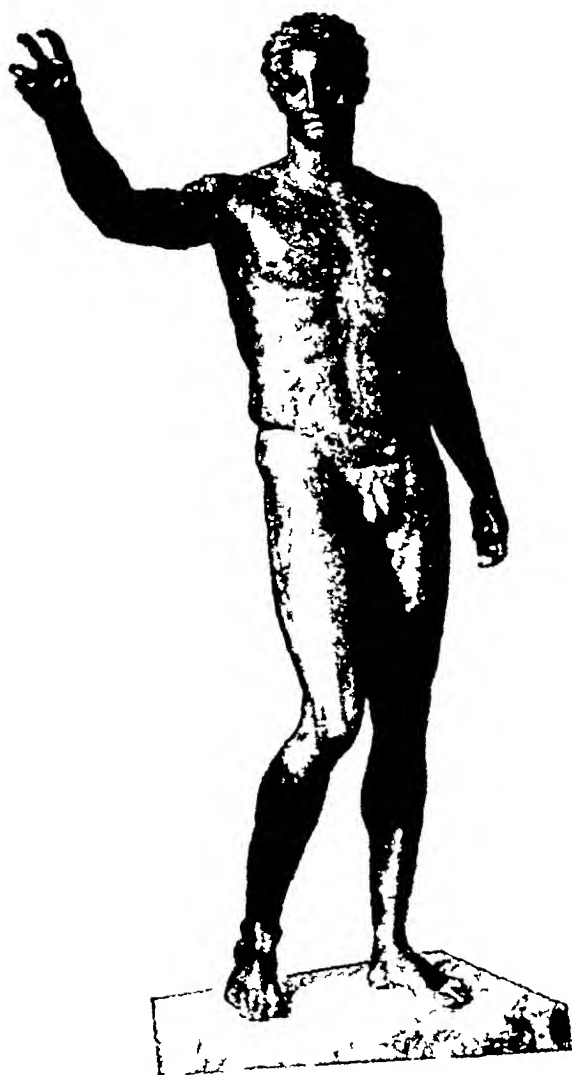


spending it upon themselves, public magnificence was replaced by private luxury. So in tragedy Aeschylus had been rugged and magnificent, dealing with heroic themes, after him Sophocles achieved the height of grace and pathos, while Euripides, a little later, dealt more with human passions and emotions. In architecture the early Doric style was severe and simple, the later Ionic was graceful and refined, and the Corinthian of the succeeding age tended to become florid and elaborate. The earlier sculptors had made statues of gods and heroes in a simple and vigorous style, Praxiteles and his school after 400 B. C. exhibited the greatest charm and beauty, but were marked by a certain softness and effeminacy; Lysippus and the Hellenistic artists represented men with a realistic effect that was sometimes overdone. Art was no longer sacred to the gods, works were produced to satisfy the vanity and vulgarity of the rich.

**Philosophy** Yet, while art and literature declined, philosophy progressed. The earliest philosophers had come from Asia Minor or Sicily and Italy, but from the time of Socrates Athens had been the home of thought. After his death there arose a number of schools, all more or less based upon his teaching. The spirit of enquiry was abroad, men were dissatisfied with the old religion and the accepted ideas, they wished to probe the truth for themselves, a childlike faith in the gods was not enough.

Of Plato, who taught in the groves of the Academy, something has already been said. He and his disciples, profoundly out of sympathy with all schools of political thought, were seeking for the ideal truth, the ideal justice, the ideal state, and in their search for the ideal they got beyond the depth of most men and failed to adapt themselves to the real.

Aristotle, the tutor of Alexander, was born in Stageira in Chalcidice, but most of his life was spent in Athens. It was his fashion to lecture while walking up and down the paths of the Lyceum, whence the members of his school were known as the "Peripatetics", or "the walkers". He was a man of the widest learning, and there is no branch of human



Bronze of Cerynto

(Found in the sea near Cythera. Perhaps it represents  
Paris offering the Apple of Strife)



knowledge, from history and natural science, politics and literature, to questions of virtue and vice, which is not indebted to his clearness of thought and his industrious investigations

Yet both these schools of philosophy were only for the learned, and gave no satisfaction to ordinary men. The old religion had been discredited by the new spirit, and nothing was supplied in its place. A still more severe blow was dealt by Alexander and his successors when they too claimed divinity. If Demetrius Poliorcetes was a god, what was Zeus? In their vain search for "an unknown god" the Greeks admitted the host of Asiatic deities to the list, and sacrificed to all alike.

The Stoics and the Epicureans tried to provide something more practical, some rule of life. About 300 B.C. Zeno of Citium in Cyprus was attracted to Athens by its intellectual atmosphere. After studying philosophy he started to teach in the Painted Portico, or "Stoa", whence his school received its name. He taught that happiness is to be gained by the practice of virtue, duty, self-denial, and temperance, and by acting according to nature and reason, pleasure and pain are external things which ought to be disregarded.

Epicurus was an Athenian and taught in his own garden in the city. Happiness, he said, is the aim of life, and this can be attained by the pursuit of pleasure. Many pleasures, of course, bring pain, and the wise man must learn to discriminate. Friendship and peaceful enjoyment of life are the best things. Religion is apt to be troublesome. The gods have nothing to do with men's affairs, and the universe and its changes are brought about by the chance collision of atoms. Life is short, there is no future state, therefore enjoy life while you may.

Such was the Epicurean doctrine, and a comfortable one, but utterly selfish and easily perverted into a lawless pursuit of any pleasure. The Stoic teaching was far nobler and higher in its aspirations. These two systems of philosophy attained wide popularity both in the Greek and in the Roman

world, but even they were adapted chiefly for the educated and wealthy classes. Until the revelation of Christianity there was no religion for the masses.

**The Seleucids of Syria** Leaving Athens, we must now turn our attention further east. Seleucus had been the one of Alexander's generals to build up a kingdom in Asia. Its boundaries were very uncertain. India was given up at once, but Bactria and Parthia were part of the monarchy for sixty years. Southwards Phoenicia and Palestine were debatable lands, the cause of as many quarrels with the Ptolemies as they had been of old when the Pharaohs and the Assyrians had fought for their possession. Westwards the Gauls were a barrier in Asia Minor, and the towns of the Ionian coast were usually independent, while semi-Hellenic kingdoms rose upon the shores of the Black Sea. The Seleucid monarchy in fact consisted of a varying number of towns more or less self-governing upon the system of the Greek city-state.

Seleucus attempted to carry out Alexander's policy. Cities were founded everywhere, called Seleuceia after himself, Antioch in honour of his father, or Laodiceia to commemorate his mother. The kings of the family were named Seleucus or Antiochus. The capital was Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, whence the kingdom was generally known as Syrian. The site was well chosen, for the city was at the cross-roads where meet the routes from the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Euphrates valley, and it was by commerce that the Seleucids amassed their wealth. In all the cities there was a large element of Greek life and a large Greek population, adventurers, mercenaries, and traders, who combined the vices of the West with those of Asia, and made the name Syrian in Roman mouths a by-word of contempt.

**The Ptolemies of Egypt** In Egypt a somewhat different policy was followed. The first Ptolemy had been wise in his choice of a province, for the geography of Egypt makes it easy alike to defend and to administer. His object was to use the land as a vast private estate. Egyptian religion,



The Laocöon

(An example of Rhodian sculpture, now in the Vatican Museum, Rome)



customs, and manners were therefore left untouched, scarcely any cities were founded, but trade by the Red Sea—Mediterranean route was encouraged, and the land was developed to its utmost extent. The only sign of Greek rule was a fleet which policed the river, the natural highway of Egypt. Alexandria itself was a town isolated and apart from the rest of the country, with a mixed population of Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, and Asiatics. There the Ptolemies lived till the days of Cleopatra, the last of the race, there was the centre of commerce, and there were the mercenary army and fleet at the one point where Egypt might be attacked. To secure her trade the Ptolemaic troops fought with Syria for the possession of Palestine, and the fleet engaged with the ships of Syria and Macedon that the islands and ports of the Aegean might be open.

Under the Ptolemies Alexandria rose to be the rival of Athens as a centre of Hellenic culture and university life. It was their pleasure to establish a brilliant court and make it famous by the encouragement of learning. The Museum was an academy of literature, mathematics, and science, where scholars could dwell and prosecute their studies at the royal expense. The library was amongst the wonders of the world, containing a copy of every known Greek book, more than half a million volumes. Euclid and Archimedes the mathematicians, and Eratosthenes the geographer, were amongst its learned men. Scholars devoted their lives to grammar and criticism. Writers of every kind abounded. But literature was chiefly imitative, it had lost its freshness and originality, in one branch only did genius show itself, in pastoral poetry, of which Theocritus was the acknowledged master.

Yet of art and philosophy Alexandria was not the home. The latter remained the distinctive feature of Athens, and the former found new vigour in two other states, of which we must speak.

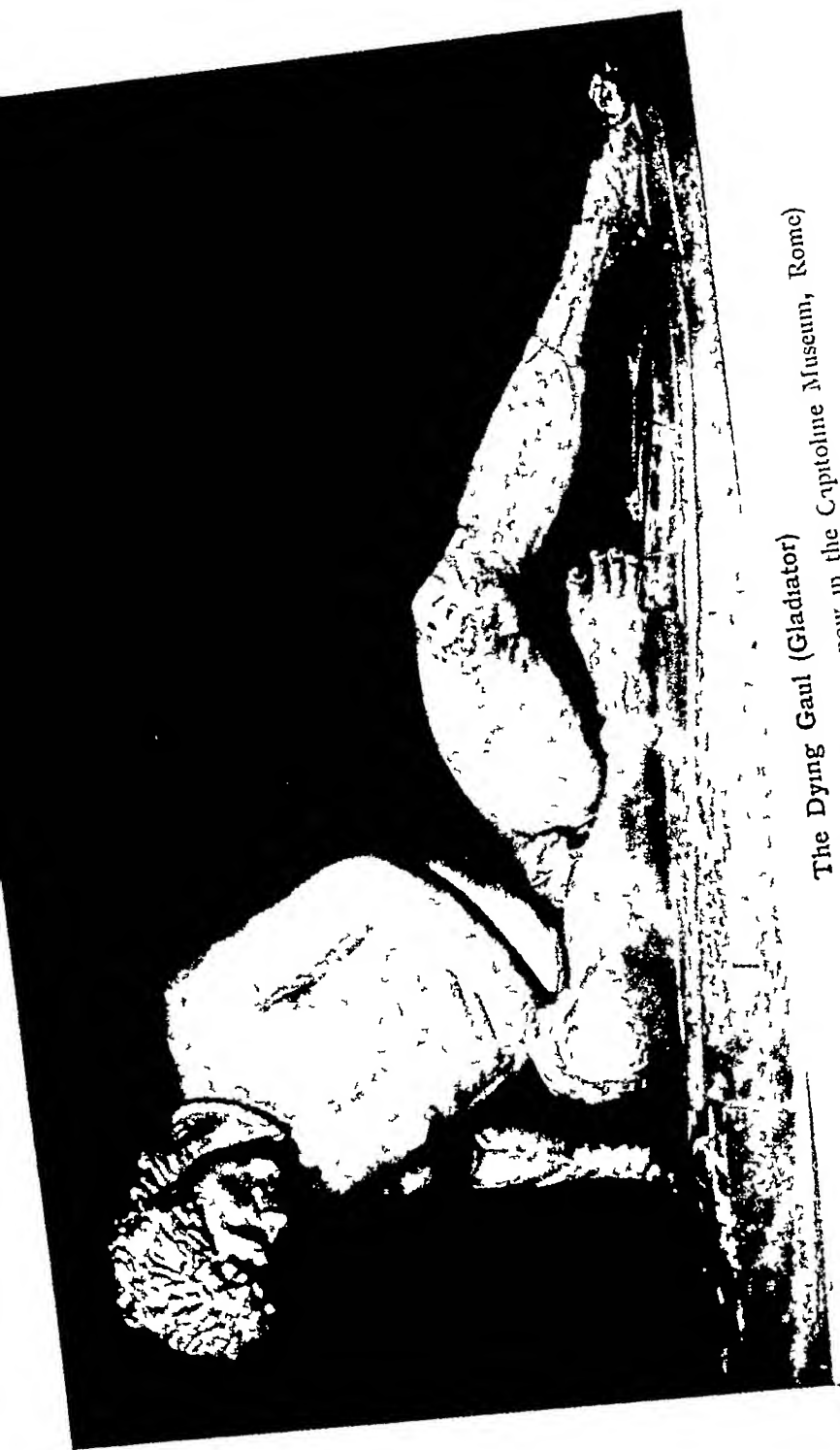
**Rhodes** The island of Rhodes, by virtue of its sea-girt position upon the trade-routes, had always been rich and



had generally preserved its independence About 400 B C the three towns of the island combined to build the city of Rhodes, which soon became the most important of the insular states We have seen how it was able to defy even the force and skill of Demetrius Poliorcetes, and it obstinately refused to bind itself to Syria, Macedonia, or Egypt Its naval power was considerable, but since it was devoted entirely to pacific ends, to the suppression of piracy and the maintenance of open ports, the Rhodians remained the most popular of the Greeks

With the growth of wealth Rhodes became a centre of culture The most famous artistic work was the huge bronze figure of the sun-god Helios, the work of the Rhodian Chares, a pupil of Lysippus This "Colossus of Rhodes", towering up to the height of 105 ft, stood for some sixty years at the mouth of the harbour, till it was thrown down by a disastrous earthquake in 227 B C Rhodian taste hankered after the colossal, we are told that there were in the island no less than a hundred statues of enormous size Another piece of sculpture made by Rhodian hands is the still existing group of "The Laocoon", which depicts the agony of a struggle with death Besides sculpture, painting too flourished, and history was a favourite subject, while Rhodes was one of the important centres of the Stoics, and in Roman days was the fashionable place for the study of oratory

**Pergamum** The last state that space allows us to mention is that of Pergamum, an inland city of Asia Minor not far from Lesbos The curious feature about the Pergamene kingdom is that it represented no tribe or nationality Its founder was a certain Philetaerus, treasurer of Lysimachus of Thrace About the year 280 B C he revolted, and, with his master's treasure, fortified his castle and built a city round it His successors, who were named either Eumenes or Attalus, by means of their wealth raised a considerable army and fleet and played no small part in the history of western Asia Minor, doing good service to the Hellenic cause by defeating and keeping in check the troublesome Galatians



The Dying Gaul (Gladiator)  
(A marble copy from a bronze of Pergamum, now in the Capitoline Museum, Rome)



But Pergamum is especially to be remembered for its culture. Like the Ptolemies, the Attalids encouraged learning of every kind. Schools of science and literature flourished, medicine and mathematics were studied, a great library and a botanical garden were established. Yet it was for sculpture that Pergamum had the greatest fame. Who does not know of "The Dying Gladiator", or, as it should be called, "The Dying Gaul"? The well-known statue is typical of the Pergamene style. But the grandest work in this city of beautiful buildings was the great altar of Zeus, 100 ft square, round which ran a magnificent marble frieze depicting the battle of the giants and the gods.

With this brief mention of some centres of Hellenistic life we must rest content, it is impossible here to treat properly the civilisation which was spread all over the eastern part of the Mediterranean world, our last task is to see how that was brought into touch with Rome.

#### SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Mention the more famous artists and their works of art
- 3 Have you studied any of the famous statues, whether originals, casts, or photographs?
- 4 What piece of Greek sculpture or architecture pleases you most?
- 5 From your own knowledge whom do you consider to have been the greatest Greek author?
- 6 Was Greek philosophy of any use to anyone?

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## GREECE AND ROME

Rome and the Greek colonies of Italy From the early days of the city Rome had been in contact with the Greek traders of Cumae and the other colonies near to the bay of Naples, and it was largely under their influence that her civilisation developed But it was the necessary conquest of the Samnites that brought the Romans face to face with the Greek towns of southern Italy These cities had been much weakened by Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse, and had for the most part fallen an easy prey to the Bruttians, the Lucanians, and other tribes, who poured upon them from the highlands Tarentum alone remained a place of importance, but she was so sunk in luxury that when she insulted the "barbarian" Romans and had to face the consequences, she was forced to look around her for help

Pyrrhus in Italy, 280—275 B.C. Across the Adriatic was a chivalrous prince, Pyrrhus of Epirus A cousin of Alexander the Great, he was like him in his brilliant generalship and adventurous activity, but his nature was so restless that he never completed the tasks that he had begun He had already distinguished himself by interfering in the struggles for the Macedonian crown, and for a few months he himself had worn it He was brother-in-law of Demetrius Poliorcetes, and had fought for him and his father at Ipsus To him the Tarentines applied for aid, and he left his capital of Ambracia and crossed to Italy with a force of nearly 30,000 men and some elephants His ambition was to defeat Rome and Carthage alike and make himself master of the West

At Heracleia he gained the first victory of the campaign, the phalanx and the elephants won the day But so costly was his success that he exclaimed, "Another such victory will send me home without a man", and a "Pyrrhic victory" has

become proverbial. He then negotiated for peace, but the Romans refused to treat with him while he was upon Italian soil. He promptly marched to within a few miles of Rome, but nobody joined him as he had hoped, and he was forced to fall back. A second victory was equally costly, and, filled with admiration for so honourable and valiant a foe, he left Italy and passed to Sicily, which was begging for help against the Carthaginians now that Agathocles was dead. In the course of two years he drove out the enemy from every point except the strong fortress of Lilybaeum, that he could not take. He wished to cross to Africa, but his Sicilian allies refused to supply the means. Therefore in disgust he quitted them and returned to Italy. Yet everything now went wrong. He tried to surprise the Roman general, Curius Dentatus, near Beneventum, but the surprise failed and the Romans caught him among the hills. His cavalry could not act, the elephants were maddened by blazing arrows and trampled down the infantry, and the broken phalanx was utterly defeated.

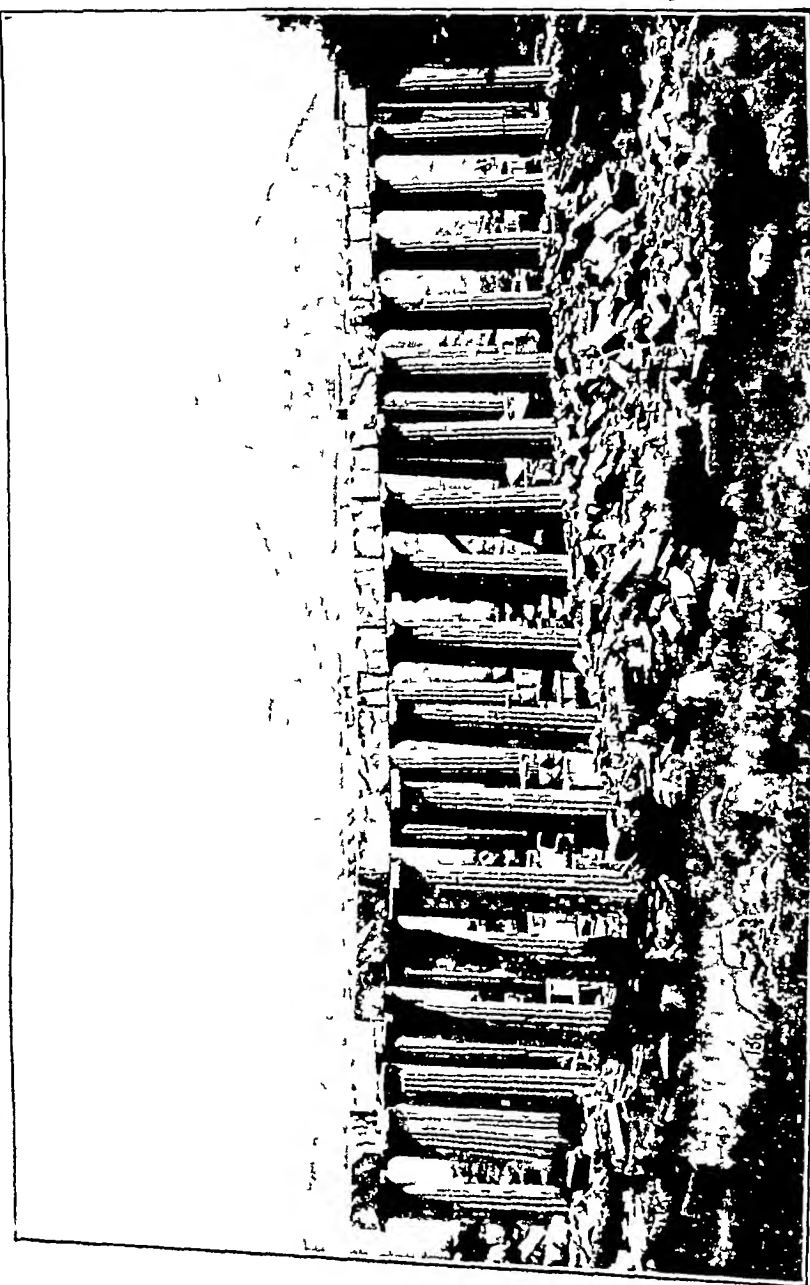
He gave up the attempt and returned to Greece to fight with Antigonus Gonatas for the possession of the Peloponnese. There in 272 B.C. he met his fate, for, as he was fighting the Macedonians in the streets of Argos, he was struck down by a tile hurled from a roof by an old woman—an inglorious end for the most brilliant leader of his day. About the same time Tarentum surrendered, and with its submission the cities of "Great Hellas", as it was called, passed under the yoke of Rome.

Rome and Sicily. The next Greek district to experience Roman interference was Sicily. After the death of Agathocles his mercenaries, called the Mamertines, had been paid to go away and had established themselves in Messana, whence they had impartially raided Syracuse and every other town within reach. A young Syracusan named Hiero, who had distinguished himself under Pyrrhus, was so successful in defeating the brigands that his grateful countrymen established him as king. Hard pressed by him the Mamertines appealed for

help, some to Rome and some to Carthage. Both powers sent their forces to Messana, and the first Punic war began in 264 B.C. The Romans, ever ready at a moment's notice, were superior in numbers as well as in military ability, and drove back Syracusans and Carthaginians alike. Hiero thought it prudent to make peace, and for the rest of his long reign he remained the faithful ally of the new power. Most of the other Greek towns copied his example. Agragas alone offered serious resistance, and was stormed after a seven months' siege. The end of the war in 241 B.C. saw the whole island, including the Greek communities, more or less dependent on Rome.

**Siege of Syracuse, 213—212 B.C.** During the second Punic war Hiero died, his son was soon murdered, and the Syracusan republic was restored. Confidence in Rome had been rudely shaken by Hannibal's success and the news of the disastrous day of Cannae. When the consul Marcellus appeared in Sicily, Syracuse closed her gates against him. The Romans brought up their engines of war and tried to assault the place by land and sea. But all their skill was of no avail against the fertile genius of the famous mathematician Archimedes. Catapults and other types of artillery hurled huge stones upon the ships that ventured close, cranes grappled and upset the smaller boats, enormous burning glasses, so it is said, fired the vessels which lay at a distance, and after desperate attempts Marcellus was fain to give up the assault and resort to the slower method of investment. When many weary months had passed, at length the Romans scaled the walls by night and gained possession of the plateau of Epipolae. It was now only a question of time. Disease broke out among the defenders in the lower city near the marshes, treachery admitted the invaders to Ortygia itself, and the great city was given up to plunder. Among the slain was Archimedes, who, deep in a mathematical problem, failed to answer the question of a Roman soldier. The fall of Syracuse was followed by the complete subjugation of Sicily.

The Romans land in Greece, 228 B.C. We next find



Temple at Bassae near Phigaleia

(The sculptures of this temple are in the British Museum)





Rome in relation with Greece itself The capture of Roman ships by Illyrian pirates had made a punitive expedition necessary When punishment had been meted out, the Romans sent to the larger Greek states to explain their action The Greeks gave them their thanks, and the Corinthians even admitted them to the Isthmian games, and the Athenians to the Eleusinian mysteries, thus recognising that they were no barbarians

Philip V of Macedon Roman intervention, however, in Greek affairs was not a deliberate act of conquest, it was brought about by the quarrels of the Greek states and the aggressions of the new king of Macedon Antigonus Doson had died in the year 220 B.C., soon after the battle of Sellasia, honourably leaving the throne to his youthful ward, Philip V Relying upon his inexperience, the Aetolians raided the Peloponnese in every direction, making their head-quarters at Phigaleia in Arcadia Aratus and the Achaeans could do nothing against them, and again begged the help of Macedon Despite his youth Philip proved himself no mean general He ravaged Aetolia, sacked Thermon the capital, and forced the Aetolian League to make peace.

Philip challenges Rome His first success led him to over-estimate his power Urged on by an Illyrian refugee and excited by the Roman disasters in the second Punic war, he made a most unnecessary alliance with Hannibal and challenged the Roman power. The warnings of the astute Aratus were thrust aside and the Achaean leader was poisoned The Romans, however, were too busy to pay much attention to Philip They contented themselves with sending a small squadron to watch his doings and with forming an alliance with the Aetolians and Pergamum to be a check upon him Sparta, now under a tyrant, joined this alliance For some years a desultory warfare raged Philopoemen, the new general of the Achaeans, who had already made his name at Sellasia, reorganised the forces of his League and defeated the Spartans, while Philip on the whole was successful in the north A temporary peace was concluded in 205 B.C.

No sooner was peace signed than Philip sent help to Hannibal, now back in Africa, and Macedonians were taken prisoners by Scipio in the battle of Zama. Eastwards too he interfered, and arranged with Antiochus the Great of Syria to divide the possessions of Egypt, which was under a boy king. The Ptolemies, however, who had been in alliance with Rome since the news arrived of Pyrrhus' defeat, checkmated the scheme by placing the boy under the guardianship of the Roman people. At length Philip's aggressions became so pronounced that Rhodes, Athens, and Pergamum, the peaceful states, begged the Romans to intervene. Aetolia too was ready to join in the alliance. With some reluctance the Romans assented, and in the autumn of 200 B.C. sent a fleet to join with the allied squadrons, while one of the consuls landed in Epirus and marched towards Macedonia. But neither in that year nor in the next did the Romans act with energy or achieve much success.

**Battle of Cynoscephalae, 197 B.C.** However, the new consul, Flamininus, prosecuted the war with vigour. Starting from Apollonia, he forced his way up the river Aous over the passes into Thessaly, driving Philip back to Macedonia. Then he turned southwards into Central Greece for the winter. Even the Achaeans were disgusted with the barbarous devastation committed by Philip in a raid on Attica and with an attempt to poison Philopoemen, and they decided to join the Romans. Nabis, the tyrant of Sparta, and the Boeotians too became allies.

Thus it was at the head of united Greece that Flamininus moved north in the spring. Philip refused to restore their independence to the Greek cities and withdraw his troops from the "fetters of Greece", Corinth, Chalcis, and Demetrias, and the allies moved into Thessaly. The battle took place upon Cynoscephalae, the range of hills near Pherae where Pelopidas had fallen in the midst of his victory (see p. 248). The infantry of the two armies was not unevenly matched, each side having about 25,000 men, but the Aetolian cavalry gave a superiority to the allies. The day was dark and misty,

and the battle began with an affair of outposts. Gradually more troops were hurried up, and the fight developed. Philip with the right division of the phalanx was at first successful, but his left was unable to form upon the rough ground. Seeing this, Flamininus sent some elephants against it, and then, charging with his legionaries, drove it down the hill in confusion, and wheeled to take the other wing in the rear. The Macedonians broke and fled, leaving 8000 dead upon the ground and 5000 prisoners in the enemy's hands.

Flamininus at the Isthmian games, 196 B.C. Flamininus then dictated terms of peace, trying to leave all parties evenly balanced. Philip was to pay an indemnity, surrender almost all his ships of war, and hand over to Rome the cities he held in Greece. The Aetolians were bitterly dissatisfied at being restrained from plunder, and exclaimed that Greece had only changed masters. At the Isthmian games all Greece flocked to hear the Senate's decision, which ten commissioners were bringing from Rome. The trumpet sounded, and the herald proclaimed that all the cities of Greece hitherto under Philip were free. Men gazed at one another incredulously. The herald read the proclamation again. And a tumultuous shout of joy arose, as the Greeks pressed around their liberator. Two years later, after arranging matters and breaking the power of the brutal Nabis, Flamininus fulfilled his word. The Roman troops were withdrawn, and the Greeks were left to themselves.

The Romans and Antiochus, 191—190 B.C. But the independent spirit of the Greeks was their ruin. Scarcely had the Romans gone, before the discontented Aetolians began to intrigue. They stirred up Nabis to give trouble, and they begged Antiochus of Syria to give them help. Nabis indeed soon came to the end he deserved, for he was defeated by Philopoemen and murdered shortly afterwards, and Sparta joined the Achaean League. The Romans might neglect the Aetolians, but Antiochus was a serious foe. Already his ambition had led him to attack Egypt, which was under the protection of Rome. He had tried to make himself master

of all the Greek cities of Asia Minor and even of Thrace, and the Romans had bidden him desist. Approached by the Aetolians and further incited by Hannibal, who was living at his court, he crossed to Greece and established himself at Demetrias and Chalcis.

Then the Romans declared war, and the consul Glabrio marched through Thessaly to Thermopylae, which was held by Antiochus. The old plan was repeated: some of the Romans forced the mountain track which the Aetolians tried to hold, and the pass was turned. Antiochus fled to Chalcis, and thence took ship to Ephesus. A year later the Aetolians were forced to submission, and the Romans followed the king to Asia. L. Scipio, advised by his brother, the conqueror of Carthage, marched through Macedonia and Thrace, crossed the Hellespont, and annihilated the Syrian army at Magnesia under Mount Sipylus.

Thus the Romans were led to intervene among the Asiatic Greeks. The sequel was inevitable. For the moment they took nothing for themselves, but the force of circumstances, lust of conquest, and desire for plunder led them on, till the reduction of the Hellenised East was completed by the Asiatic campaigns of Pompey and by Cleopatra's defeat by Augustus at Actium.

**Conquest of Macedonia** For a few years Greece itself was quiet. But Philip, dissatisfied with the little reward he had gained for his loyalty to Rome against Antiochus and Aetolia, was preparing for another struggle and resuming his activities. The war, however, did not come in his day, for the Romans had no desire to interfere unless there were need. They had steadily refused to act in the Peloponnese, where the Achaean League was perpetually quarrelling with Sparta and Messene, and Philopoemen, "the last of the Greeks", had been captured and put to death.

**Battle of Pydna, 168 B.C.** At length the Romans declared war upon Perseus, the new Macedonian king. For three years the Roman consuls displayed extraordinary incompetence, and the Greek world began to think of changing

sides Then Aemilius Paullus took command Advancing through the pass of Tempe, he met the army of Perseus at Pydna, in the coastal plain that lies between Olympus and the sea The day was disastrous for Macedon The phalanx was thrown into disorder by the broken ground and penetrated by the legionaries, the cavalry fled, and the army broke up amidst fearful scenes of carnage, leaving 20,000 upon the ground and 10,000 in the Romans' hands, while the victors lost but 100 men Perseus escaped from the field, but soon afterwards surrendered He was carried to Rome and forced to walk in chains in the triumph of Paullus, and spent the rest of his life in Italy

Macedonia was broken up into four districts with limited self-government Punishment was then meted out to those whose loyalty was suspected The time for clemency was past Pergamum indeed was forgiven with a reprimand But Rhodes was injured by the establishment of Delos as a free port, from the rest of Greece, especially from the Achaean League, 1000 suspects were deported to Italy, and Epirus was delivered to the soldiers of Paullus that they might enrich themselves

Conquest of Greece. We now come to the last scene of all In Macedonia a pretender named Andriscus, claiming to be the son of Perseus, set himself up as king, but he was defeated by the Romans, and the whole country was organised as a Roman province Two years later the eternal bickerings of Sparta and the Achaeans demanded the presence of the legions The Romans with great patience endeavoured to settle the quarrels of these petty states, and bade the League confine itself to the cities of Achaëa alone But the Achaeans were insolent and defiant, and enlisted the support of Thebes and Chalcis

Sack of Corinth, 146 B C A sharp lesson to cure their folly was inevitable The troops from Macedonia moved into Greece, and at the Isthmus were taken over by the consul Mummius, who had just arrived from Italy The Achaeans were defeated outside Corinth, their head-quarters, and after waiting

three days the conqueror entered the city. The men who remained were put to death, the women and children were sold as slaves, and the town was burnt and destroyed. With the one example of severity the Romans remained content. For the rest, the various cities were enrolled as the dependent allies of the Roman people, under the general supervision of the governor of Macedonia. Thus had the states of Greece abused their own independence and the moderation of Rome and brought their fate upon themselves.

**Conclusion** It is not our province to follow further the fortunes of the Greeks, then history became merged in that of Rome. Their much-prized freedom was gone, but their insane jealousies also were checked, and life in Greece became more tranquil and happy when its selfish and quarrelsome children were controlled by a firm hand. Their character indeed was changed: the old attractive qualities disappeared, the vigorous sense of independence, the desire to manage their own affairs, the intense, if narrow, patriotism, uglier traits took their place, craftiness, cunning, and greed, which made the Romans use the word "Greek" as a term of contempt. Yet, in spite of all this, the Romans were the first to acknowledge the debt which they owed to their subjects.

"Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes  
Intulit agresti Latio"

In the sphere of art and literature, in the world of culture and thought, in wit and originality, the Greeks remained supreme, and Athens was the university of the Roman world. The Romans did little more than copy the Greeks. From the shores of Spain and Gaul to the remote recesses of the Black Sea and the distant banks of the Indus, Greek influence was the agent of civilisation. The New Testament was written in Greek that it might be intelligible to all men. When the Roman empire was split into two, the eastern half spoke Greek, thought Greek, and lived Greek. And, when in 1453 A.D. the Turks captured Constantinople, it was the

Greek scholars who, fleeing to Italy, brought about the Renaissance and the Reformation, broke the deadening traditions of the Middle Ages, and gave to Europe the true Greek individuality and freedom which make the spirit of progress

SUGGESTIONS —

- 1 Make a summary of the chapter
- 2 Could you write something about the principal persons and events?
- 3 Why did Greece fall before Rome?
- 4 Was its fall due to Roman lust for power?
- 5 Was the conquest for the good of the world?
- 6 What is our chief debt to the Greeks?
- 7 What were the good and the weak points of the Greek character?



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Arabic numerals refer to pages, Roman to chapters    Figures in brackets signify the number of syllables

For English pronunciation emphasise the syllable which bears an accent', or the long  $\bar$  or short  $\acute$  mark of quantity

When the English pronunciation is incorrect the Greek value of the vowel is given afterwards in brackets

*ch* is always pronounced as *k*

*c* and *g* should be pronounced as *c* and *g* in *come* and *go*, but English practice varies

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